

The emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic in north-western Europe

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abstract

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The nature of the Lower/Middle Palaeolithic transition has been one of the most debated questions in early Prehistory since the mid-20th century. The root of these debates lies primarily in how early prehistorians constructed chronological models, relying heavily upon index fossils. Such models have “artificial boundaries designed to provide structure to a complex record and, rather than being conceived of as permanent or real, should be frequently examined and revised (Corbey and Roebroeks, 2001)” (Monnier, 2006). In this paper, we will not focus our efforts on issues relating to nomenclature and systems of classification. Instead, we will focus on a time frame within which rapid behavioural and technological changes have been documented: the period between MIS 9 to 6.

Working on a large scale, and taking account of all of north-western Europe and its southern fringes, a group of researchers working on the main sites from this period propose an assessment of current research on the emergence of the “Middle Palaeolithic”. Using a rich corpus of archaeological sites, we discuss how humans occupied north-western Europe and its southern margins between MIS 9 to 6, focusing particularly on questions of taphonomy, conservation, chronology and environment, as well as reviewing the pattern of technological change within lithic assemblages. This overview of current

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research into the emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic will help to define future research paths and advance our understanding of this key period of human evolution.

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1. Introduction

“The work on understanding [the Early Middle Palaeolithic] and its significance in the evolution of archaic European hominids can begin”. These words of conclusion written by White et al. (2006) reveal that our knowledge of

this period remains embryonic. However, they also emphasize that the Western European record has developed considerably these past years and now opens new research prospects. This paper is part of this double approach.

First of all, it aims to establish a critical overview of the currently available record for north-western Europe (the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the northern half of France) and its southern margins (the southern half of France), for a chronological period ranging from the end of the Lower Palaeolithic to the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic, from MIS 9 to 6, or 337 to 130 ka (after [Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005](#)). Over the past decades, most researchers have come to agree that the transition between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic marks a major change in the history of human evolution ([Gamble, 1999](#); [White and Ashton, 2003](#)). It was first of all defined from a material point of view by a technological change involving a shift in production aims from bifaces to Levallois flakes ([Bordes, 1950](#)). This obvious material bipartition is still present in most minds, but the available archaeological data for north-western Europe and the studies undertaken up until now enable us to establish a renewed portrait of lithic technologies during the second half of the Saalian ([Corbey and Roebroeks, 2001](#)). This technological overview reveals here another side to this transition between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, going beyond the traditional dichotomies assert and reinforced by analytical approaches to Levallois technology, on one hand, and bifaces, on the other ([Monnier, 2006](#)).

The transition between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic is currently perceived as a period of human history marked by profound behavioural transformations involving cognitive, social and adaptive changes ([Gamble, 1999](#); [White and Ashton, 2003](#)), which are revealed by the lithic industries. The general representation of lithic industries will enable us, in a second phase, to bring to light spatio-temporal disparities, which will be assessed through an anthropological and behavioural approach, which is now paramount for research into this period ([Monnier, 2006](#); [Brenet, 2011](#); [Scott, 2011](#); [Herisson, 2012](#); [Van Baelen, 2014](#)).

2. Background

In order to understand how this division between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic originated, and the impact of this historiographic legacy within

current debates focused on the transition between these two periods, we must first briefly review over one hundred and fifty years of prehistoric studies.

From the beginning of the 19th century onwards, multiple discoveries of lithic artefacts were made in brick quarries in the north of France, the United Kingdom and Belgium. Members of scholarly societies and academic institutions rapidly proved the anthropogenic status of these artefacts. After heated debates, the notion of the “very early antiquity of Man” gained ground throughout the 19th century among the scientific community. The evidence for the age of these lithic industries was based on geological work on stratigraphy and fluvial deposits on one hand, and on typologies of lithic artefacts on the other. This double approach was the key to the success of the pioneering prehistorians who demonstrated the “Antiquity of Man”; including Laurent Traulle, Casimir Picard and Jacques Boucher de Perthes in France, Joseph Prestwich, John Evans and Charles Lyell in England, as well as Philippe-Charles Schmerling and Edouard Dupont ([Hurel and Coye dir., 2011](#)). In 1872, following the work of [Thomsen \(1836\)](#), Gabriel de Mortillet proposed a relative chronology, defining periods based on “the easiest to discern and the most precise” lithic industry ([De Mortillet, 1873, 1883](#)). This marked the beginning of the division of the Palaeolithic where the two oldest periods (the Chellean and Acheulean) were followed by the Mousterian period (see [Monnier, 2006](#) and [Hurel and Coye dir., 2011](#), for further details).

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, research was directed towards tethering this loose chronology of cultures to specific geological eras. The fluvial terraces of the large sedimentary basins of northwest Europe were fundamental to constructing a chrono-climatic framework for Palaeolithic lithic industries. In northern France, for example, the work of Henri Breuil, Victor Commont, Franck Bourdier and François Bordes led to successive interpretative models, aiming to correlate the terraces with known Glacial-Interglacial cycles, and by extension to date the industries

discovered within them ([Tuffreau et al., 1981](#)). The chronological limits and the characteristics of the types of industries fluctuate in the works of Commont and Breuil, but significantly, Bordes established a clear division between the Acheulean and the Mousterian, marked by the Eemian Interglacial (Riss-Würm). Taking a techno-typological perspective, he observed that “we know no pure in situ Levallois site in a clearly Rissian or Pre-Rissian layer” ([Bordes, 1950](#)). “Typologically, the main division between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic is the presence or absence of bifaces. Technically, it is the presence of facets [...] and the Levallois or non-Levallois debitage of these flakes...” ([Bordes, 1950](#)).

The chrono-cultural framework defined by Bordes in the 1950s was progressively eroded by a series of sites discovered in the 1970s and 1980s, and the development of the first radiometric dating methods for the Pleistocene ([Ronéed., 1982](#)). The simple equations that Lower Palaeolithic $\frac{1}{4}$ Acheulean $\frac{1}{4}$ biface industries without Levallois flakes without butt faceting $\frac{1}{4}$ Riss or pre-Riss and Middle Palaeolithic $\frac{1}{4}$ Mousterian $\frac{1}{4}$ industries without bifaces with Levallois flakes with butt faceting $\frac{1}{4}$ Riss-Würm and Würm were shown to be obsolete. A new interpretative framework was constructed for these assemblages, based initially on typo-technology, and then on lithic technology for the material culture, whilst the development of thermoluminescence dating tightened chronological control. In 1976, at Biache-Saint-Vaast, lithic industries with numerous Levallois flakes and lacking bifaces were discovered. These dated from before the Last Interglacial, and were technologically and typologically similar to certain Mousterian industries from the Last Glacial period, raising the question of their links with the Acheulean, as well as how the Middle Palaeolithic began ([Tuffreau et al., 1981](#), p. 296). The new data from Biache-Saint-Vaast further undermined the Eemian partition, which definitively crumbled after the discovery of sites attributed to the Mousterian and correlated to the Saalian (Maastricht-Belvedère: [Roebroeks, 1982, 1988](#); lower level of Rheindahlen: [Bosinski, 1976](#)) or to the Riss (Grotte Vauffrey: [Rigaud dir., 1988](#)). At the beginning of the 1980s, this important “chronological overhaul” ([Jaubert, 1999](#), p. 40) opened the way to new interpretations of ante-Weichselian industries, leading Tuffreau to redefine the initial stages of the Middle

Paleolithic in northern France ([Tuffreau, 1979](#), p. 140). This first classification of the Saalian industries was mainly based on the presence or absence of bifaces and the relative proportion of the latter in the assemblage. Three groups of industries were differentiated: “Upper Acheulean with frequent bifaces, Upper Acheulean with rare bifaces or Epi-Acheulean and ante-Weichselian industries with no bifaces” ([Tuffreau, 1979](#), p. 141). Multiple Saalian industry denominations were used throughout the 1980s and 1990s for the north of France: Epi-Acheulean with a tendency towards blade production ([Tuffreau et al., 1981](#)), Ferrassie-type Mousterian, Biache facies ([Tuffreau, 1986](#)), evolved non-Levallois Acheulean ([Marcy, 1989](#)), Cambresian facies of the Middle Palaeolithic ([Tuffreau et al., 1989](#)), Mousterian of Levalloisian facies ([Ameloot-Van-der-Heijden, 1991](#)), etc. These qualifying terms show that researchers' perceptions of these Saalian industries were changing. The evolved Acheulean status given to these industries twenty years earlier was progressively discarded. Only the bifaces perceived as reminiscent of the Acheulean point towards the existence of a link between Lower Palaeolithic assemblages and those now classified as belonging to the early phase of the Middle Palaeolithic.

From 1980 to today, the debate on the Lower to Middle Palaeolithic transition has transcended the boundaries of north-western Europe and extended into new fields of research, namely Spain, Italy, Central Europe or the Middle East (e.g. [Ronéed., 1982](#); [Picin et al., 2013](#); [Adler et al., 2014](#); [Wisniewski, 2014](#); [Santonja et al., 2015](#)). The discoveries of new sites have multiplied, and considerable efforts to date occupations have been made alongside the development of new radiometric methods (e.g. ESR, U/Th, TT-OSL). The enriched corpus of well-recorded sites and an increasingly firm chronological framework for the period between 337 and 130 ka, has led to renewed interest for this period over the past decade. This momentum is reflected by a series of PhD theses focusing on sites attributed to the Early

Middle Palaeolithic in northwestern Europe: [Moncel \(1989, 1999\)](#) for Orignac 3; [Soriano \(2001\)](#) for Mesvin IV, La Cotte de Saint Brelade and Gouzeaucourt; [Scott \(2006\)](#) for a series of English sites; [Djema \(2008\)](#) on an overview of sites in Aquitaine and the Cantabrian coast; [Ashton \(2010\)](#) for a summary of the sites in Great Britain; [Brenet \(2011\)](#) for Cantalouette 1, Combe Brune 2 and 3; [Herisson \(2012\)](#) for Biache-Saint-Vaast and Therdonne; [Van Baelen \(2014\)](#) for Kesselt-Op de Schans.

As shown by this brief historiographical review, the present-day chronological framework was established by cycles of construction and deconstruction of established models. Rather than directly testing the validity of the current division between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, we propose in this paper to comprehensively present the available data for a chronological period assimilated to the end of the Lower Palaeolithic and the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic in north-western Europe and its southern margins, i.e.

the period between MIS 9 to 6, from 337 to 130 ka.

3. Material and methods

The geographical area investigated here includes north-western Europe (United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the northern half of France) and its southern margins (southern half of France) ([Fig.1](#)). For convenience, the geographic breakdown follows the borders of the countries in question. Only France was divided into four geographical sectors due to the large amount of records present in this area. This subdivision follows the traditional intervention zones of research teams and the present-day regional administrative limits: the northwest (from the tip of the Armorican Massif to the first plains of the Parisian Basin), northeast (from the Parisian Basin to Alsace), southwest (from the Aquitaine Basin to the western boundaries of the Massif Central) and the southeast (from the Massif Central to the Alps) ([Fig. 1](#)). For each of the eight geographic entities defined in this way, all of the sites in stratigraphic context correlated to isotopic stages 9 to 6 (337e130 ka, after [Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005](#)) were examined.

A geodatabase was completed by referent researchers for each region using published and unpublished data from the 123 recorded sites and 236 archaeological layers. The coordinates from the sites were defined using the WGS84 international projection system in connection with scale analysis. For each occupation or archaeological level, a series of criteria was defined in order to characterize the dataset as consistently as possible.

The occupation context can be primary (in situ remains in the sedimentary deposits that initially covered them) or secondary (reworked remains in deposits that did not initially cover them). The spatial integrity of the remains is explained: preserved spatial integrity (no or very little post-depositional disturbance) or nonpreserved spatial integrity (post-depositional phenomena resulting in considerable redistribution of the remains).

For the chronological setting of the occupations, we chose to use the smallest common denominator to correlate all of the sites in north-western Europe and its southern fringes; the marine isotopic stages. The chronology of the sites and the different occupations was established using LR04 stack ([Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005](#)) in order to obtain a unified chronological framework, informative of broad climatic tendencies. The marine isotopic stages are not used to signify the climatic and environmental conditions in which the occupations took place. We will not revisit the discrepancy between marine and continental records, and varying responses in different environments extending between 42 and 55 latitude. The attribution of a specific occupation level to a particular isotopic stage was classified as based on direct radiometric dates on archaeological remains (TL on heated flint, ESR on teeth, U/Th on bone, etc.), on radiometric dates on sediments or concretions (IRSL, tephra, etc.), or on methods of relative chronology (lithostratigraphy, biostratigraphy, terrace system, raised beach, etc.).

It is essential to recall that certain systems, such as loessic sequences or terrace systems, are conducive to establishing the chronological background. In some cases, such sequences can be accurately correlated with the isotopic curve and provide a resolution that is in some instances even higher than those obtained by radiometric dating techniques. The highest accuracy is reached for occupation

levels in primary position that are preserved in long sedimentary sequences and where different independent proxies are available for relative, indirect and direct dating. Taking these elements into account, each occupation is assigned to an isotopic stage or, when possible, substage (question marks are used in case of uncertainties). The accuracy of each correlation is assessed and expressed as a score between 0 and 5, ranging from (0) no correlation, and (1) correlation uncertain, very scant proof, over (2) correlation uncertain, some proof and (3) good correlation but lack of convergent proof, to (4) precise and convergent correlation and (5) perfect, precise and convergent correlation. This score allows unreliable chronological correlations (0e2) to be excluded from the interpretation.

In addition to the archaeological remains, the presence or absence of faunal and anthropological remains is also indicated per record. Likewise, for each record entered in the database, the presence or absence of the following production systems was registered: Levallois (Boeda and Pelegrin, 1983; Boeda, 1986, 1988a; Van Peer, 1992; Boeda, 1993, 1994; Dibble and Bar-Yosef, 1995; Boeda, 1997), blade production (not elongated flake production, only blades removed from volumetric blade cores; Boeda, 1988b; Otte et al., 1990; Revillion, 1994; Boeda, 1997), Discoid (Boeda, 1993; Locht and Swinnen, 1994; Boeda, 1997; Peresani, 1998, 2003; Locht, 2004), Migrating platform core reduction (MPCR)/ "Système par Surface de débitage Alterné" (SSDA), formerly named "Clactonian" flaking (Ashton et al., 1992, 1994; Forestier, 1993;

shaping (Boeda, 1990, 1991, 1997; Garreau, 2000; Chevrier, 2006). Finally, the main raw material of each assemblage was recorded.

4. Results: MIS 9 to 6 regional overview

An overview of the current knowledge of human occupations correlated from MIS 9 to 6 (337e130 ka) for each of the eight geographical entities is presented below. These regional synopses aim to contextualize the data presented in the summarized tables and to assess which past and present research dynamics affected the site corpus. They also try to address the potential and the interpretative limits of each regional dataset within the wider debate on the



Fig. 1. Geographic entities studied in Western Europe: United-Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France. France has been divided in four geographic sectors: North-west (from the Massif Armoricaïn point to the first Bassin-Parisien plains), North-east (from the Bassin-Parisien to the Alsace plain), South-west (from Bassin Aquitain to occidental margins of the Massif Central) and South-East (from the Massif Central to the Alps). Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Boeda, 1997; White, 2000), Quina (Turq, 1988; Bourguignon, 1997), Prepared Core Technology (White et al., 2011), others (weakly predetermined flaking method). The presence or absence of each of these production systems for each occupation is based on the latest published technological study of the site (cited in the references). Different definitions and realities are thus concealed (for instance in the Levallois or Discoid denominations), depending on the authors and the assemblages. We will return to this crucial topic in the discussion. For each record, the presence or absence of four types of shaped tools is furthermore recorded: pebble tools, bifaces (Boeda et al., 1996) referred to as "Acheulean", bifaces referred to as "Mousterian" and trifaces. Note that the trifaces were recently defined as mixed matrices resulting from a combination of flaking and

emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic in Western Europe.

In order to facilitate comparisons, all the regional overviews are based on the following framework: number of sites, number of occupations (archaeological layers/levels), site context (open-air, rock shelter, cave, coastal beach ...), resolution of the chronostratigraphic framework (>an isotopic stage, ¼ 1 isotopic stage, isotopic sub-stage), construction of a chronostratigraphic framework (lithostratigraphy, radiometric dates, biostratigraphy, terrace system, coastal beaches...), presence or absence of human remains, degree of preservation of the sites (primary/secondary position, spatial integrity, presence/absence of fauna, wood, seeds, pollen, insect...), reconstruction level of the palaeoenvironmental and regional palaeogeographic framework, state of regional research (early or recent

discoveries or both, new data, ongoing research programmes), reference sites for the region, old or recent regional summaries, contribution of the region to the debate on the beginnings of the Middle Palaeolithic.

4.1. United Kingdom

Eighteen British sites are currently attributed to MIS 9-6 (containing 33 archaeological layers; Table 1), nine of which are from the Thames deposits (Fig. 2). Further sites are also known from less intensively researched fluvial systems (i.e. Solent: Davis, 2014; Hatch, 2014), but they lack precise dating. The lower reaches of the Thames are widely accepted as reflecting four post-Anglian interglacials (Bridgland, 1994, 2001, 2006; Preece, 1995; Keen, 2001), and have attracted researchers since the mid-19th century. The firm chronostratigraphic record for the Thames underpins our understanding of the British early Middle Palaeolithic (EMP). Recently, the subdivision of British MIS 7 sites into early and late phases has been proposed, based on the Aveley faunal sequence (Schreve, 2001a,b), potentially corroborated by amino acid ratios on associated Bithynia opercula (Penkman et al., 2011). The stratigraphic position of most Thames sites suggests an early Interglacial (Late MIS 8 or early 7) date. However, independent correlation of these subdivisions within MIS 7 is necessary.

Most British sites occur in open-air contexts, the largest sites being associated with raw material sources (eg. Crayford: Spurrell, 1880a,b; Scott, 2011; Baker's Hole: Smith, 1911; Wenban-Smith, 1996; Scott, 2010); but

there are also some occurrences further away from flint outcrops (e.g. Stoke Tunnel: Layard, 1920; Scott, 2011). Fluvial capture points aside, probable sites rich in Levallois remain undated: notably, Caddington South Site (near Luton in Bedfordshire: Bradley and Sampson, 1978) and Finglesham, East Kent (Parfitt and Halliwell 1996). OSL dating is often the only available dating method, and remains problematic in isolation. The apparent “fluvial bias” of the British record may thus be taphonomic, reflecting capture and preservation e and a lack of loess. Only two EMP cave sites are known: Pontnewydd, Elwy Valley (Aldhouse-Green et al., 2012) and La Cotte de St. Brelade (Jersey), a coastal fissure system (Callow and Cornford, 1986; Scott et al., 2014). The former has produced the only early Neanderthal remains from Britain (Compton and Stringer, 2012). North Sea and underwater palaeovalley deposits could also represent potential context for future Saalian sites discovery in UK as the prospection of Area 240 showed recently, about 11 km off the east of Norfolk and from a depth of 25 m (Tizzard et al., 2014).

Most of the British sites are primary context sites, although they are generally fluvially rearranged, and only one (Crayford) was in situ (Spurrell, 1880a,b). Most are rich in mammalian faunal remains and molluscs, although direct evidence for vegetation (pollen and plant macros) is less common, leading to the partial reconstruction



Fig. 2. Distribution map of British sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 1. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

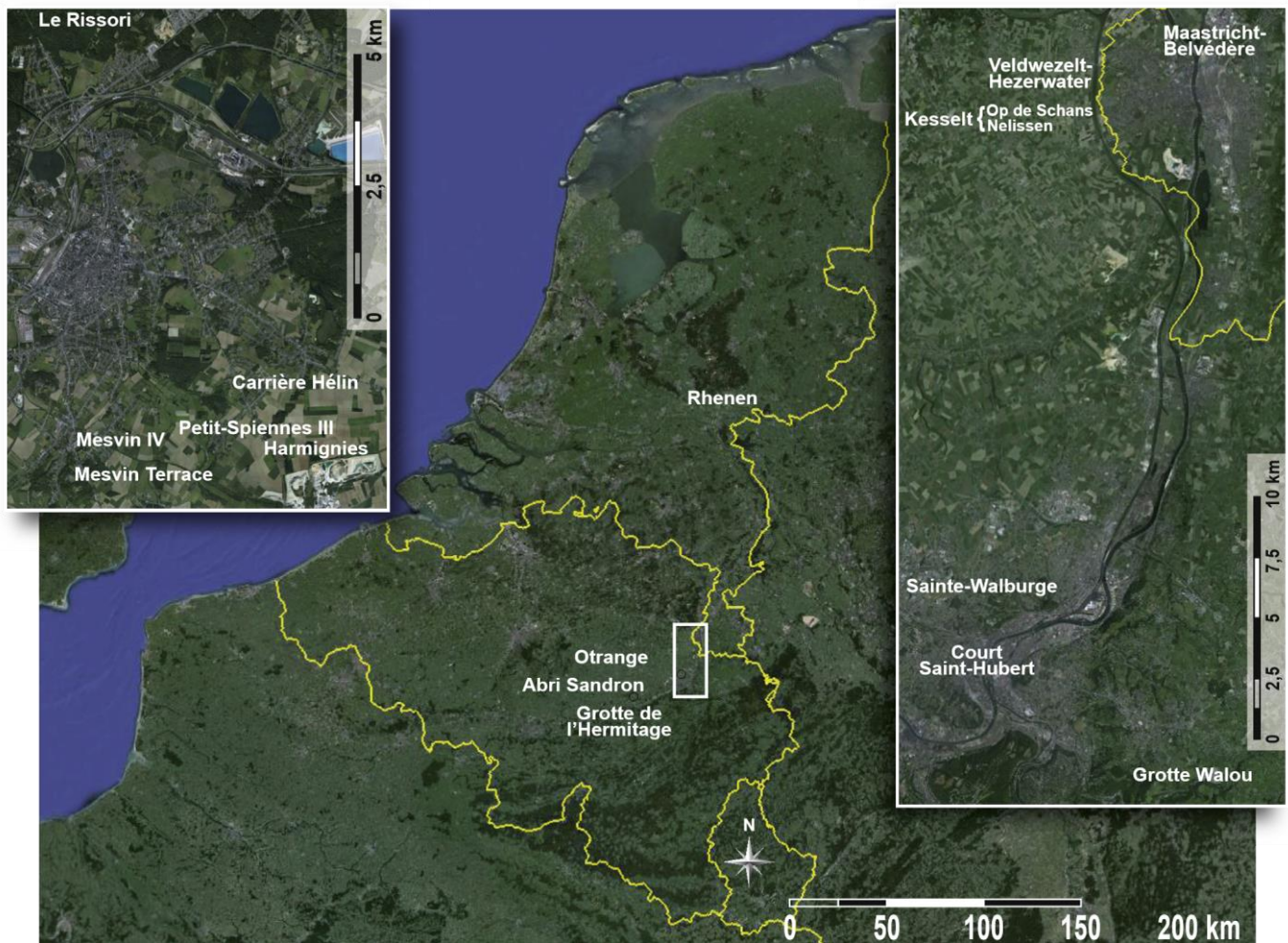


Fig. 3. Distribution map of sites of the Netherlands and Belgium from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Tables 2 and 3. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

of the environment, characterized by cool, open conditions, and few trees. Reconstructing the broader palaeogeography is complicated by difficulties in correlating these phases to MIS sub-stages (and thus to global sea level) and reconstructing the channel breach. Catastrophic flooding during MIS 12 was amplified by ongoing erosion in the southern North Sea, with a second flood event suggested for MIS 6 (Busschers et al., 2007; Gibbard, 2007; Gupta et al., 2007). Combined with the progressive sinking of the North Sea plain (Busschers et al., 2008), this resulted in Britain becoming “less accessible” throughout the early Middle Palaeolithic (Ashton et al., 2011). Consequently, there are few well-dated British late MIS 7 sites (Ashton et al., 2003; Scott and Ashton, 2011).

Most sites were discovered before mechanised gravel extraction and are now built over; few have been excavated recently, apart from Lion Pit Tramway Cutting (Schreve et al., 2006), Cuxton (Wenban-Smith, 2004), Harnham (Bates et al., 2014) and Pontnewydd (Aldhouse-Green et al., 2012). A regional overview of the entire British Middle Palaeolithic predated the current chronostratigraphic framework (Coulson, 1990) and recent research (AHOB/Pathways to Britain) has concentrated on old collections (cf. Scott, 2011) and redating accessible sites (e.g. Crayford).

The site of Purfleet has led to debate concerning the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic. At this site, the upper part (Botany Member) of gravels correlated with the Lynch Hill/Corbets Tey formation of the Thames (MIS 10-9-8) yielded simple prepared cores (where a surface has been exploited from a minimally prepared platform) and some Levallois cores (White and Ashton, 2003). These

date to MIS 9/8 (terrace stratigraphy, OSL), and the archaeology is said to demonstrate one of the ways in which the principles underlying Levallois flaking were already immanent in the Acheulean prior to the widespread adoption of classic Levallois flaking after the MIS 8 Pleniglacial (White and Ashton, 2003; White et al., 2011). Handaxe manufacture persists alongside Levallois flaking into MIS 7 at Pontnewydd (where fine-grained raw materials were rare), potentially at Cuxton (although the excavators are reinvestigating the OSL dates: Bates et al., 2014) and during MIS 8 at Broom (secondary context) and Harnham (Bates et al., 2014). With the exception of Cuxton, these sites are concentrated in the west of Britain, contrasting with the Thames pattern, potentially reflecting raw material effects or the repertoires of different groups, maybe at different times (Fig. 2).

4.2. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands only one well-preserved site complex is known from the Saalian period. The Belvédère locale is situated on the northern edge of the Northwest European loess-belt and is located near of the Dutch town of Maastricht (province of Limburg; Fig. 3). “The multidisciplinary research at the Maastricht-Belvédère quarry between 1980 and 1990 remains the flagship of Middle

Table 1
Data of British sites from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 2. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Precise location	Level/Layer	MIS Precise MIS		Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial integrity	Human remains	Faunal remains	Levallois	Pebble tools	"Acheulean" biface	"Mousterian" biface	Trifacial shaping	Blade	Discoid	MPCR/SSDA	Quina	PCT	Others	Main raw material	Bibliography
Purfleet	Botany Pit	Botany Gravel	9/8	Early 8?	4	e	AAR: MIS 9 (Penkman et al., 2007); OSL: 154 ± 19 ka; 323 ± 23 ka; 292 ± 43 ka; 405 ± 27 ka; 360 ± 62 ka; 267 ± 38ka (Bridgland et al., 2013)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	P?	A	A	A	P	P	A	P	A	Flint	Bridgland, 1994; Schreve et al., 2002; White and Ashton, 2003; Scott, 2011; Bridgland et al., 2013
Harnham	Harnham	Phase I	8	?	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	Flint	Bates et al., 2014	
Harnham	Harnham	Phase III	8	Late 8?	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	Flint	Bates et al., 2014	
Harnham	Harnham	Phase III	8	Late 8?	4	e	OSL: OxL-1341: 248 ± 19 ka OxL-1342: 255 ± 20 ka; AAR ¼ Late 8/early 7 (Bates et al., 2014). DMK values fall within range of MIS 7	Mammalian biostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	Flint	Bates et al., 2014	
Harnham	Harnham	Phase IV	8?	Late 8?	3	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	Flint	Bates et al., 2014	
Northfleet	Baker's Hole	Coombe Rock	8	Late 8	4	e	AAR: Late 8/early 7 (Wenban-Smith, 1995)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	Flint	Smith 1911; Wenban-Smith, 1995; Scott, 2010, 2011	
West Thurrock	Lion Pit Tramway Cutting	Bed 1	8/7	Late 8/early 7	4	e	AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2007)	Terrace system, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	Flint	Schreve et al., 2006; Penkman et al., 2007; Scott, 2011
West Drayton/ Yiewsley			8/7?	Late 8/early 7?	3	e	e	Terrace system	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Collins et al., 1978; Ashton et al., 2003; Scott, 2011	
Aveley	Sandy Lane/ Purfleet Road	Bed 2	7	Early 7	4	e	AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2007)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	?	No	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schreve, 2001b; White et al., 2006; Penkman et al., 2007	
Ebbsfleet	Ebbsfleet Channel	Lower fluvial (Phase 2) deposits	7	Early 7	4	e	e	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian and molluscan biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	A	Flint	Burchell, 1933, 1935, 1936; Kerney and Sieveking, 1977; Wenban-Smith, 1995; Scott et al., 2010
Pontnewydd		Lower Breccia	7	Early 7	4		TL: 200 ± 25 ka 269 ± 37 ka (Aldhouse-Green et al., 2012) (Ivanovitch et al. in Green ed., 1984) U/Th e speleothem underlying: 215 ± 36 ka (Schwarz in Green ed., 1984, 91e92); 224 p 41/31 ka	Mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	P	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	P	A	Igneous, coarse	Green ed., 1984; Aldhouse-Green et al., 2012
Crayford	Stoneham's Pit	Lower Brickearth	7	e	3	e	e	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Spurrell 1880a,b; Kennard, 1944; Scott, 2010; Schreve 1997
Creeffield Road	St.Barnard's	Top of gravel under "brickearth"	7	e	4	e	e	Terrace stratigraphy	Secondary	?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Brown, 1886, 1887, 1889; Scott, 2010	
Creeffield Road	School Site	Top of gravel under "brickearth"	7	e	4	e	e	Terrace stratigraphy	Secondary	?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Brown 1886, 1887, 1889; Scott 2010	
Selsey	Life Boat Station Channel		7	e	4	e	AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2013)	Raised beaches, mammalian and molluscan biostratigraphy	?	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Parfitt, 1998; White et al., 2006	
La Cotte de St. Brelade		H	7?	e	3		TL, but probably not good	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		G	7?	e	3	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint/ quartzite	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		D	7	e	3		TL (average of 6 samples): 238 ± 35 ka (Huxtable in Callow and Cornford 1986)	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		C	7	e	3		TL (average of 6 samples): 238 ± 35 ka (Huxtable in Callow and Cornford 1986)	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		B	7	e	3	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		A	7	e	3	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
Aveley	Sandy Lane/ Purfleet Road	Bed 5	7	Late 7	3	e	e	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	?	No	A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	White et al., 2006; Schreve, 2001b
Crayford	Norris' Pit	Lower Brickearth	7	Late 7	3	e	AAR: late MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2013); OSL: 70 ka (Scott, 2011)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Chandler, 1916; Kennard, 1944; Scott, 2010
Brundon	Jordan's Pit	Bed 3	7	Late 7 (7a?)	3	e	U-Series on bone (not cutmarked): 230 ± 30 ka; 174 ± 30 ka (Szabo and Collins, 1975); AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2013)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Moir and Hopwood 1939; Szabo and Collins, 1975; Wymer, 1985; Schreve, 2001b; Scott, 2010
Holbrook Bay	Stutton and Harkstead	brickearth	7	Late 7?	4	e		Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	?	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Wymer, 1985; Wymer 1999; Scott, 2011; Penkman et al., 2013	
Ipswich	Stoke Tunnel	Stoke "Bone Bed"	7	Late 7?	3	e	AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2013)	Terrace stratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Scott 2011; Wymer 1985; White et al., 2006; Penkman et al., 2013	
Stanton Harcourt	Dix's Pit	Stanton Harcourt Channel	7	Late 7?	4	e	ESR and U-series (inconclusive) OSL; AAR: MIS 7 (Penkman et al., 2007)	Terrace system, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Buckingham et al., 1996; Buckingham 2007; Penkman et al., 2007
La Cotte de St. Brelade		3	6	e	3	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
La Cotte de St. Brelade		5	6	e	3	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
Cuxton	Rectory site		9 or 7	e	2	e	OSL: 232.64 ± 13.75 ka (RLAHA-X2561); 197.5 p 17.09 ka (RLAHA-X2563)	Terrace stratigraphy	Primary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	?	Flint	Wenban-Smith, 2004
Broom		Middle Beds	9-7?	e	2	e	OSL: between 325 and 205 ka (Toms et al., 2005)	Terrace stratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Chert	Hosfield and Chambers, 2002, 2009; Hosfield, 2005; Toms et al., 2005	
La Cotte de St. Brelade		F	7? e		1	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint/ quartzite	Callow and Cornford 1986

La Cotte de St. Brelade	E	7? e	I	e	e	Raised beaches, mammalian biostratigraphy										Primary	Yes	A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Callow and Cornford, 1986
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Table 2
Data of sites of the Netherlands from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 3. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Precise location	Level/ Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial integrity	Human remains	Faunal remains	Levallois tools	Pebble	“Acheulean” biface	“Mousterian” biface	Trifacial shaping	Discoid	MPCR/ SSDA	Quina P	Others	Main material	Bibliography raw			
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site A	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa 2009))	Primary	Yes?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P (Unprepared technology)	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012			
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site B	Unit IV (Subunit IV-B)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009))	Primary	?	A	P (very few)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P?	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012		
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site C	Unit IV (Subunit IV-B)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009))	Primary	Yes	A	P (poorly preserved)	P (frequent)	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012	
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site D (30-m long section)	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa 2009))	Primary	?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012	
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site F	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa 2009))	Primary	Yes (some rearrangement)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P (frequent)	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site G	Unit IV (Subunit IV-B)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa 2009))	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012		
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site H	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009))	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P (frequent)	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012	
Maastricht- Belved ere	Site K	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	e	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009))	Primary	Yes	A	A	P (mainly on scrapers)	A	A	A	A	A	A	P (frequent)	A	A	P	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012

Maastricht-Belvedere	Site N	Unit IV (Subunit IV-C-β)	7 (or possibly 9)	5	TL on burnt flint: average of ten fine grained dates, all deriving from the Unit IV archaeological sites ¼ 250 ± 20 ka (Huxtable, 1993; Oxford reference number 712Kft)	ESR dating on Unit IV molluscs: 220 ± 40 ka (Van Kolfschoten et al., 1993)	MIS7 (Pedostratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, terrace stratigraphy, mammal biostratigraphy (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Vandenberghe et al., 1993)), or MIS 9 (AAR, molluscan biostratigraphy (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009))	Primary	Yes	A	P (poorly preserved)	P (mainly on scrapers)	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P (well-prepared)	A	Flint	Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; Roebroeks, 1988; Roebroeks et al., 1992; Vandenberghe et al., 1993; De Loecker, 2006; De Warrimont and Stassenstraat, 2007; Roebroeks et al., 2012; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012	
Rhenen	Different locations (Wageningen, Lunteren, Soesterberg, Maarn, Amersfoort, Gooimeer)	S3 (Rhenen industry)	6 or older?	Early 6 or older?	e	OSL date for Unit S3: 168 ± 19 ka; alongside additional OSL dates for under- and overlying deposits (Busschers et al., 2008; Van Balen and Busschers, 2010)	Lithostratigraphy, mammalian biostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	P?	?	A	A	A?	A?	A?	P	?	Flint	Stapert, 1981, 1987, 1991; Niekus and Stapert, 2005 (and references therein) Van Balen, 2006; van Balen et al., 2007; Busschers et al., 2008; van Balen and Busschers, 2010

Table 3
Data of sites of Belgium from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 3. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Precise location	Level/Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial remains	Human tools	Faunal remains	Levallois	Pebble	integrity	remains biface	"Acheulean" biface	"Mousterian" biface	Trifacial shaping	Blade	Discoid	MPCR/SSDA	Quina	PCT	Others	Main raw material	Bibliography					
Kesselt	Op de Schans	3	9/8	Late 9/early 8	4	e	Several OSL and ITL dates on loess deposits overlying the main occupation horizon (¼ archaeological level 3) (Van de Moortel, 2008)	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Primary								Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Van Baelen et al., 2007, 2008, 2011; Van de Moortel, 2008; Meijs et al., 2012; Van Baelen, 2014		
Mesvin terrace	e	e	8	e	4	e		e Lithostratigraphy,	Secondary terrace system							No	A	P	P	A	P?	A?	A	A	?	?	A	P	?	Flint	Briart et al., 1872; Haesaerts, 1978; Cahen et al., 1979; Michel, 1983; Cahen, 1984; Pirson et al., 2009	
Petit-Spiennes III	e	e	8	e	3	e		e Lithostratigraphy,	Secondary terrace system							No	A	P	P	A	A?	P?	A	A	A?	A	A	P	P?	Flint	Cahen and Haesaerts, 1982, 1983; Cahen et al., 1985; Cahen, 1984; Watteyne, 1985; Pirson et al., 2009	
Mesvin IV	e	e	8	e	4	4 U/Th dates available on bone and teeth, e giving an average of 287 ± 12 ka; Consequently, the site is generally placed around 300e250 ka (Szabo in Cahen et al., 1984)		Lithostratigraphy, Biochronology (mammalian), Terrace system	Secondary							No	A	P	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	P	Flint	Cahen and Haesaerts, 1981; Roche, 1981; Gysels and Cahen, 1981; Van Neer 1981, 1985, 1986; Cahen et al., 1984; Cahen and Michel, 1986; Soriano, 2000, 2001; Ryssaert, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Van Asperen, 2008; Pirson et al., 2009	
Kesselt	Nelissen	A1	7	e	3	e	3 TL dates (R1/2, R1/3, R1/4) on sediment from Hees Soil (¼ X-Soil) in Nelissen brickyard pit are available, giving an average age of 297 ± 34 ka; several additional TL (sediment) and 14C (snails, humic material) dates are available for overlying loess deposits (Haesaerts et al., 1981; Gullentops, 1991; Huijzer, 1993; Vandenberghe et al., 1998; Van den haute et al., 1998, 2003; Wintle unpublished)	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Primary?							?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Meijs and Groenendijk, 1999; Groenendijk et al., 2001; Meijs, 2002		
Kesselt	Op de Schans	2	7	e	3	e	Several OSL and ITL dates on loess deposits under- and overlying the archaeological level 2 (Van de Moortel, 2008)	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Secondary? ?								A	A	?	?	A	A	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Flint	Van de Moortel, 2008; Meijs, personal communication; Meijs et al., 2012
Saint-Symphorien Helin	Carriere	'Cailloutis C', also 'Cailloutis inferieur '	6	e	3	AAR date on bone (from Cailloutis inferieur) of 286 ka (Cubuk, 1975), but date rejected due to imprecision dating technique and possible reworked character of the sample (Haesaerts, 1978)	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Secondary							No	A	A	P	A?	A	A	A	P?	P	A	A	P	P	Flint	De Heinzelin, 1959; Cubuk, 1975; Michel, 1978; Haesaerts, 1978; Cahen, 1984; Escutenaire, 1996; Di Modica, 2009; Pirson et al., 2009; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	BDA	6	e	3	e		e		Lithostratigraphy					Secondary	No	A	A	?	A	A	A	A	A	?	A	A	?	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	TDA	6	e	3	e		e		Lithostratigraphy					Secondary	No	A	A	P?	A	A?	A	A	A	?	A	A	P?	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	GRA0	6	e	3	e		e		Lithostratigraphy					Secondary	No	A	A	?	A	A	A	A	A	?	A	A	?	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	ZNB	6	e	3	e		e		Lithostratigraphy					Primary?	?	A	A	P?	A	A	A	A	A	?	A	A	P?	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	GRA1	6	e	3	e		e		Lithostratigraphy					Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	?	A	A	P	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Trooz	Grotte Walou	DI	6	e	4	ESR/UeTh on mammal teeth from younger levels CII-4 and CII-7; 14C on bone, antler, charcoal and humic	TL on heated limestone from younger level CV-2 (mean weighted age 90.3 ± 4.6 ka)			Lithostratigraphy, biochronology (macro- and microfauna), tephrochronology, palynology, anthracology					Secondary? No?		A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P?	Flint	Draily, 2011a,b; Pirson et al., 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	

										sediment from younger levels A-6, B-1, B-4, B-5, C0-C5A, CI-1 to CI-6, CI-8																			
Masnuy-Saint-Jean	Le Rissori	IV (part of 'series brunes')	8	e	2	e		e		Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Secondary	No		A	A	P	A		A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Lefrancq, 1955; Adam and Tuffreau, 1973; Locht, 1990; Adam, 1991, 2002; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011
Masnuy-Saint-Jean	Le Rissori	IIIA (part of 'series brunes')	8 or 6?	e	2	e		e		Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Secondary	No		A	A	P	A		A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Lefrancq, 1955; Adam and Tuffreau, 1973; Locht, 1990; Adam, 1991, 2002; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011
	Le Rissori		8 or 7?		8 or 7b?	2		e			Secondary	No		A	A	P	A		A	A		A	P	A				Flint	
(continued on next page)																													

(continued on next page)

Table 3 (continued)

Site	Precise location	Level/Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial tools	Human	Faunal	Levallois	Pebble integrity	remains	remains "Acheulean" biface	"Mousterian" biface	Trifacial shaping	Discoid	MSSDA	Others M	material	Bibliography raw		
Masnuy-Saint-Jean		IIIB (part of 'series brunes')						Lithostratigraphy, terrace system															Lefrancq, 1955; Adam and Tuffreau, 1973; Locht, 1990; Adam, 1991, 2002; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011		
Liege	Mont Saint- (more specifically at Court Saint-Hubert)	G-a Martin	6 or 5d?	e	2	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	?	?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	?	P?	?	?	P	?	Flint	Haesaerts et al., 2008; Van der Sloot et al., 2009, 2011
Saint-Symphorien	Carriere Helin	S.J.	6?	e	2	AAR date on bone on underlying stratigraphic level (see information Cailloutis inferieur)	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	?	Flint	De Heinzelin, 1959; Cubuk, 1975; Michel, 1978; Haesaerts, 1978; Cahen, 1984; Escutenaire, 1996; Di Modica, 2009; Pirson et al., 2009; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Harmignies	e	DA1	6?	e	2	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	?	?	A	A	?	A	A	A	A	A	A	?	?	?	?	Flint	Haesaerts, 1974; Haesaerts and Van Vliet, 1974; De Heinzelin et al., 1975; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011
Kesselt	Nelissen	A2	6?	e	2	e	Multiple TL (sediment) and 14C (snails, humic material) dates are available for deposits (Haesaerts et al., 1981; Gullentops 1991; Huijzer, 1993; Vandenberghe et al., 1998; Van den haute et al., 1998, 2003; Wintle, unpublished); 3 TL dates on sediment are available for underlying luvisol (Van den haute, De Corte, 2001)	Lithostratigraphy, overlying loess	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Meijs and Groenendijk, 1999; Groenendijk et al., 2001; Meijs, 2002	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	VLL	Previous: 6 or 5?; now: 5	Previous: late 6 (6.01) or 5d?; now: 5d	2	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Veldwezelt	Hezerwater	VLB	Previous: 6 or 5?; now: 5	Previous: late 6 (6.01) or 5d?; now: 5d	2	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	Flint	Bringmans et al., 2001a,b, 2003; Bringmans, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Meijs, 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Otrange	Gisement paleolithique	L.S.	6?	e	1	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	P	P	Flint	Thisse-Derouette and Destexhe-Jamotte 1947, 1949; De Heinzelin de Braucourt 1950; Ulrix-Closset, 1975; Otte, 1979; Jungels, 2004, 2005; Di Modica and Jungels, 2009; Di Modica, 2010	
Otrange	Gisement paleolithique	G.B.	6?	e	1	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A?	A?	P?	P?	A?	?	?	?	A?	?	Flint	Thisse-Derouette and Destexhe-Jamotte 1947, 1949; De Heinzelin de Braucourt, 1950; Ulrix-Closset, 1975; Otte, 1979; Jungels, 2004, 2005; Di Modica and Jungels, 2009; Di Modica, 2011	
Liege	Sainte-Walburge	'Niveau inferieur' (also 'couche G', also 'Niveau C1 & C2 de Commont')	6?	e	1	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	P	P (¼ 1 hammertsone)	P	A?	A	A	P	A	P	P	Flint	Lohest and Fraipont, 1912; De Puydt et al., 1912; De Puydt, 1922; Ulrix-Closset, 1975; Roebroeks, 1981	
Trooz	Grotte Walou DII		6-11?	e	1	ESR/UeTh on mammal teeth from TL on heated limestone from younger level CV-2 (mean weighted age younger levels CII-4 and CII-7; 14C on 90.3 ± 4.6 ka) bone, antler, charcoal and humic sediment from younger levels A-6, B-1, B-4, B-5, C0-C5A, CI-1 to CI-6, CI-8		Lithostratigraphy, biochronology (macro- and microfauna), tephrachronology, palynology, anthracology	Secondary?	No?	A	A	A?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A?	P?	Flint	Draily, 2011a,b Pirson et al., 2011; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011	
Moha	Grotte de l'Hermitage	-	6?	e	0	e	e	e	?	?	A	P	P	A	P?	?	A	A	P	A	P	P	Flint	Fraipont and Tihon, 1896; Ulrix-Closset, 1975; Cordy, 1984; Sitlivy, 1996; Van Peer, 2001; Di Modica, 2004	

Huccorgne	Abri Sandron	-	6?	e	0	e	e	e	?	?	A	P	P	A	P?	?	A	A	?	A	A	P	?	Flint	De Loe, 1883; Fraipont and Tihon, 1896; Ulrix-€ Closset, 1975; Cordy, 1984; Van Peer, 2001
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Table 4
Data of German sites from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 4. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Level/Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial integrity	Human remains	Faunal remains	Levallois	Pebble shaping	"Acheulean"	"Mousterian"	Trifacial	Blade	Discoid	MPCR/Quina	PCT	Others	Main raw tools	biface	biface	Bibliography
Steinheim		9/8	?	4	e	Late "Holsteinian"	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology (travertine)	Secondary	No	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	No lithic artefacts	Adam, 1988
Schoningen€	12-B, 12-II	9/8	Late 9/early 8	4	In preparation	e	Lithostratigraphy (lake shore)	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Thieme, 2007; Serangeli et al., 2012; Serangeli and Conard, 2015
Schoningen€	13-II-4	9/8	Late 9/early 8	4	In preparation	e	Lithostratigraphy (lake shore)	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Thieme, 2007; Serangeli et al., 2012; Serangeli and Conard, 2015
Ariendorf	1	8	Late 8	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess, tephra)	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Quartz, Quartzite	Bosinski et al., 1983; Turner et al., 1997; Richter, 2011
Rheindahlen	B3	7	7.2	3	e	TL series from >142 to >194 ka (Frechen et al., 1992; correction of Zoller et al., 1988€)	Lithostratigraphy (loess and soil)	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schmitz and Thissen 1998; Ikinger, 2002; Thissen, 2006
Rheindahlen	B2	7	7.1	3	e	TL series from >142 to >194 ka (Frechen et al., 1992; correction of Zoller et al., 1988€)	Lithostratigraphy (loess and soil)	Secondary	N	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schmitz and Thissen, 1998; Ikinger, 2002; Thissen, 2006
Rheindahlen	B1	7	7.1	3	e	TL series from >142 to >194 ka (Frechen et al., 1992; correction of Zoller et al., 1988€)	Lithostratigraphy (loess and soil)	Primary	Partial preservation?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schmitz and Thissen 1998; Ikinger, 2002; Thissen, 2006

Table 5
Data of North-east French sites from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 5. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Exact location	Level/ Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/ 5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial integrity	Human remains	Faunal remains	Levallois	Pebble tools	"Acheulear" biface	"Mousteriar" biface	Trifacial shaping	Blade	Discoid	MPCR/Quina SSDA	PCT	Others	Main rawBibliography material

Ehringsdorf	LT, lower travertines (six layers)	7	Late 7	3		Series of similar ESR dates produced a 204 ka medium age of both UT and OT layers (Schüler, 2004)	e	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology (travertine)	Primary	No	P	P	P?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Behm-Blancke, 1960; Kahlke, 1958; Heinrich, 1981; Schëafer, 1993; Schüler, 2004
Ehringsdorf	UT, upper travertines	7	Late 7	3		Series of similar ESR dates produced a 204 ka medium age of both UT and OT layers (Schüler, 2004)	e	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology (travertine)	Primary	No	A	P	P?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Behm-Blancke, 1960; Kahlke, 1958; Heinrich, 1981; Schëafer, 1993; Schüler, 2004
Hunas	G	7/6	?	5		In preparation	In preparation	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology	Primary	No	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Hornfels	Rosendahl et al., 2006
Rheindahlen	A3	6	Early 6	3		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess and Secondary	No soil)		A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schmitz and Thissen, 1998; Ikinger 2002; Thissen 2006
Rheindahlen	A2	6	Early 6	3		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess and Secondary	soil)	No	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Schmitz and Thissen, 1998; Ikinger, 2002; Thissen, 2006
Zwochau		6	Early 6	4		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (moraine)	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Pasda, 1996
Wannen		6	Early 6	3		e	e	Tephra chronology	Primary	Yes	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint, quartz	Justus, 2000
Ariendorf	2	6	Middle 6	4		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess, Primary	tephra)	Yes	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Quartz, quartzite	Bosinski et al., 1983; Turner et al., 1997; Richter, 2011
Schweinskopf	4	6	e	4		e	e	Tephra chronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Quartz, quartzite	Schafer, 1990€
Markkleeberg		6	?	3		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (moraine)	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Baumann and Mania, 1983; Schafer, 1993; Schëafer et al., 2003€
Tonchesberg€	2A	6	Late 6	3		TL: 129 ± 12 ka; 121 ± 11 ka e (Schëafer, 1993)	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess and Secondary	No soil)		A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Quartz	Conard 1992
Murg-Kalvarienberg		6	Late 6/5	3		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (loess and Secondary	No soil)		A	P	P?	A	A	A	A	A	P?	A	A	A	Hornfels	Pasda 1994
Hundisburg		6	?	2		e	e	Lithostratigraphy (moraine)	secondary No		A	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	Flint	Ertmer 2012

L'Epinette	Cagny	I (I0, I1, I2)	9	Early 9	5	US-ESR on teeth: 318 ± 48 ka; 289 ± 43 ka; 291 ± 44 ka (Bahain et al., 2007)	ESR on sediment: 296 ± 53 ka (Laurent, 1993)	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, palynology, terrace system	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Antoine and Tuffreau, 1993; Laurent, 1993; Tuffreau et al., 1995; Dibble et al., 1997; Lamotte, 1999; Bahain et al., 2001, 2007; Tuffreau et al., 2008
Etricourt-Manancourt	Secteur 2	HUZ	9	9c	5	e	IRSL in progress	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes/No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Herisson and Goval, 2013; Herisson et al., 2015; Herisson et al., 2016
Etricourt-Manancourt	Secteur 2	HUD	9/8	9a	5	TL on burnt flint: 274 ± 32 ka, 294 ± 25 ka, 288 ± 26 ka (Herisson dir., 2015)	IRSL in progress	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	Flint	Herisson and Goval, 2013; Herisson et al., 2015; Herisson et al., 2016
Soucy		5-II	9	e	5	U/Th on teeth: 356 ± 53 ka and 399 ± 60 ka (Chausse, 2003)	U/Th on teeth (unit2, under site 5): average 362 ± 27 ka	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Lhomme et al., 2000a, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007
Soucy		5-I	9	e	5	U/Th on teeth: average 323 ± 24 ka (Chausse, 2003)	U/Th on teeth (unit2, under site 5): average 362 ± 27 ka	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	Flint	Lhomme and Connet, 2001; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme et al., 2004; Lhomme, 2007
Soucy		3-P	9	e	5	U/Th on teeth: average 361 ± 30 ka (Chausse, 2003)	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Lhomme et al., 2000b, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007; Nicoud, 2011; Chausse, 2003
Soucy		1	9	e	5	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Lhomme et al., 1998a,b, 2000b, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007
Soucy		5-0	9	e	5	e	U/Th on teeth (unit2, under site 5): average 362 ± 27 ka	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Lhomme et al., 2000a, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007
Soucy		3-S	9	e	5	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Lhomme et al., 2000a, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007
Soucy		2	9	e	5	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system, biochronology	Primary	No?	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Lhomme et al., 2000a, 2004; Chausse, 2003; Lhomme, 2007
Plachy-Buyon		N3	9	e	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary/secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Locht et al., 1995
Revelles	Les Terres-Sellier	-	9	e	3	TL on burnt flint: 291.6 ± 28 ka; 263.6 ± 26.2 ka (Debenham, unpublished)	IRSL in progress	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	Flint	Guerlin et al., 2008
Clairy-Saulchoix	Le Champ Mugotte e - Au Chemin de Pissy		9	e	3	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Sellier, 2002; Lhomme et al., 2002; Rocca, 2005
Saint-Valery-sur-Somme		SO	8	e	3	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	?	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	De Heinzelin and Haesaerts, 1983
Blache-Saint-Vaast		H	7	7e	5	ESR (US) on bone: 258 ± 26 ka (Bahain, 2007); e ESR (US) on bone: 245 ± 28 ka (Bahain et al., 2015)		Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Marcy, 1986, 1988; Tuffreau, 1986; Leroy, 1990; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Auguste, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Bahain, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012
Blache-Saint-Vaast		IIA	7	7e	5	TL on burnt flint (underestimated due to none e dosimetric values): 175 ± 13 ka (Huxtable and Aitken, 1988); Gamma ray spectrometry on human skull: 263 ± 53/37 ka (Yokoyama, 1989); upper UePa on human skull: >175 ka (Yokoyama, 1989); ESR (US) on bone: 230 ± 24 ka and on tooth: 229 ± 27 ka (Bahain, 2007); 219 ± 30 ka (Bahain et al., 2015)		Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary	Yes and No	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Vandermeersch, 1978; Piningre, 1978; Boeda, 1986, 1988a,b, 1994; Marcy, 1986, 1988; Tuffreau, 1986, 1988a; Beyries, 1988; Huxtable and Aitken, 1988; Yokoyama, 1989; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Burie, 1992, 1996; Bahain et al., 1993; Auguste, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Dibble, 1995; Leblanc, 1999; Rougier, 1999, 2003; Marx, 2001; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Auguste et al., 2005; Guipert, 2005; Louguet, 2006; Bahain, 2007; Liouville, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Guipert et al., 2011; Herisson, 2012; Herisson et al., 2013; Rots, 2013
Blache-Saint-Vaast		IIbase	7	7e	5	ESR (US) on bone: 190 ± 17 ka (Bahain, 2007); e 222 ± 27 ka (Bahain et al., 2015)		Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Marcy, 1985, 1986, 1988; Bouchet, 1986; Tuffreau, 1986, 1988a,b; Auguste, 1988, 1990, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Tuffreau and Marcy, 1988; Leroy, 1990; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Burie, 1996; Leblanc, 1999; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Bahain, 2007; Liouville, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012; Herisson et al., 2013
Blache-Saint-Vaast		E	7	7e or 7c-a	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1989, 1991; Auguste, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012
Blache-Saint-Vaast		D0	7	7e or 7c-a	4	ESR (US) on bone: 139 ± 27 ka (Bahain, 2007); e 138 ± 28 ka (Bahain et al., 2015)		Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1989, 1991; Auguste, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Bahain, 2007; Liouville, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012
Abbeville	Route de Paris/rue de l'Abreuvoir		7	e	3	e	In progress	Terrace stratigraphy, lithostratigraphy, biochronology	Primary	Yes?	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Locht et al., 2013
Drucat		e	7	e	3	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Locht and Kiefer, 2009; Locht et al., 2013
Etricourt-Manancourt	Secteur 2	LRS	7	7c-a	5	e	In progress	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	Flint	Herisson and Goval, 2013; Herisson et al., 2015; Herisson et al., 2016
Etricourt-Manancourt	Secteur 2	LGS	7	Late 7a	5	e	In progress	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Herisson and Goval, 2013; Herisson et al., 2015; Herisson et al., 2016
Therdonne		N3	7	Late 7a	5	TL on burnt flint: 178 ± 11 ka (Locht et al., 2010; Herisson, 2012)		Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	P	Flint	Locht et al., 2000; Gadebois, 2006; Locht et al., 2010; Herisson, 2012; Coudenneau, 2013; Herisson et al., 2013; Herisson and Locht, 2014
Montierres-lès-Amiens	Boutmy-Muchembled quarry	-	7	Late 7a?	4	e	ESR on quartz: 200 ± 57 ka (Laurent, 1993)	Lithostratigraphy, terrace system	?	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	Flint	Commont, 1912; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Tuffreau, 1983; Bordes, 1984; Antoine, 1990; Soriano, 2000	
Maisons-Alfort			7/6		3	U/Th on bone: 162 ± 9 ka; 206.5 ± 17.8/15.2; e		Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Durbet et al., 1997; Hadjouis, 1998	

		Late 7a/ early 6				190 ± 120/74 ka %> average 186 ± 23 ka (Durbet et al., 1997)																			
Site	Unit	6	Early 6	4	e	e	Lithostratigraphy, biochronology, terrace system	Primary-Secondary	No	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Remarks		
Biache-Saint-Vaast	D1	6	Early 6	4	e	e			No	A	P	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Marcy, 1984, 1985, 1986; Bouchet, 1986; Auguste, 1988, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Marcy and Tuffreau, 1988b; Tuffreau, 1988a,b; Leroy, 1990; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Burie, 1996; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Liouville, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012		
Biache-Saint-Vaast	D	6	Early 6	4	e	e			No	A	P	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Marcy, 1984, 1985, 1986; Bouchet, 1986; Auguste, 1988, 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2003, 2012; Marcy and Tuffreau, 1988a; Tuffreau, 1988a; Ameloot-Van der Heijden 1991; Auguste and Patou-Mathis, 1994; Burie, 1996; Louguet, 2004, 2005; Liouville, 2007; Goubel, 2011; Herisson, 2012		
Plachy-Buyon	N2	6	Early 6?	4	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Locht et al., 1995	
Plachy-Buyon	N1	6	Middle 6?	4	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Locht et al., 1995	
Gigny	Baume de Gigny	XXI	6	e	3	e	U/Th on speleothem: 145 ± 18/15 ka; RPE on speleothem: 145 ± 66/45 ka (Campy and Vuillemeiy, 1989)		No	A	A	P?	A	A		P	A	A	A	A	A	Siliceous stone	Campy and Vuillemeiy, 1989		
Achenheim	sol 74	6	e	3	e	e		?	?	A	P	P	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	A	Siliceous stone	Heim et al., 1982; Lautridou et al., 1985; Junkmanns, 1995		
Havrincourt 2	Les Bosquets	J	6	Late 6	5	e	OSL in progress		Yes	A	P	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Goval and Herisson, 2012; Goval dir., 2013; Herisson and Goval, 2013		
Ailly-sur-Noye	N3	6/5	Late 6/ early 5e	5	e	e			Yes	A	P	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Blondiau dir., 2009; Locht et al., 2013		
Achenheim	Sol 81	9?	e	2	e	e			No	A	P	A	P	A		A	A	A	P	A	A	Siliceous stone	Heim et al., 1982; Lautridou et al., 1985; Junkmanns, 1995		
Argoeuves	Serie grisatre^8	e	e	2	e	e		?	?	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Breuil, 1913; Bourdier, 1969; Bourdier et al., 1974; Agache, 1976; Tuffreau, 1979; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Antoine, 1990; Soriano, 2000		
Argoeuves	Serie roussatre^	8	e	2	e	e		?	?	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Breuil, 1913; Bourdier, 1969; Bourdier et al., 1974; Agache, 1976; Tuffreau, 1979; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Antoine, 1990; Soriano, 2000		
Gouzeaucourt	H	8 or older	e	2	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	P	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau and Bouchet, 1985; Marcy, 1989; Tuffreau et al., 1989; Tuffreau, 1992; Lamotte, 1995; Soriano, 2000	
Gouzeaucourt	G	8 or e older		2	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	P	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau and Bouchet, 1985; Marcy 1989; Tuffreau et al., 1989; Tuffreau, 1992; Lamotte, 1995; Soriano, 2000	
Gentelles	CLG	8? e		2	e	e			No	A	P	P	P	P		A	A	A	P	P	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 2001; Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004; Goval, 2005; Tuffreau et al., 2008	
Salouel	1974	8/7 8/ early 7?	Late2	e	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Antoine, 1990; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Ameloot-Van der Heijden et al., 1996	
Salouel	1976	8/7 8/ early 7?	Late2	e	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Antoine, 1990; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Ameloot-Van der Heijden et al., 1996	
Gentelles	LBP	7? e		2	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 2001; Balescu and Tuffreau 2004; Goval, 2005; Tuffreau et al., 2008	
Bapaume	Les-Osiers	Serie B 7/6? Late 7a/ early 6?		2	e	e	Relative TL (Mfe) on loess (Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004)		No	A	A	P	A	P		A	A	P	P	A	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau, 1971; Tuffreau, 1976; Tuffreau, 1979; Tuffreau, 1987; Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004; Koehler, 2008, 2011	
Riencourt-les-Bapaume	Serie III	7 or e 6?		1	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Tuffreau dir., 1993	
Gentelles	LGC	6? e		2	e	e	IRSL on alcalin feldspaths: 194 ± 21 ka (Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004)		No	A	P	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 2001; Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004; Goval, 2005; Tuffreau et al., 2008	
Champvoisy	-	8 or 6?	Early 8 or 2 early 6?	e	e	e	Relative TL (Mfe) on loess (Balescu, 1988; Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004)		No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Chertier and Hinout, 1988; Tuffreau, 1989; Balescu, 1988; Balescu and Tuffreau, 2004	
Saint-Acheul	Atelier Commont e carriere Bultel-Tellier	-	8-6 e	2	e	e		?	?	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Commont, 1909, 1911; Bordes and Fitte, 1953; Tuffreau and Fagnart, 1986	
Bagarre	Couche 10	8-6 e		1	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 1975; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Boeda, 1994€		
Bagarre	Couche 7 8-6 e			1	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 1975; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Boeda, 1994€		
Bagarre	Couche 5 8-6 e			1	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	A	P	A	P	A	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 1975; Tuffreau et al., 1981; Boeda, 1994€	
Longavesnes	e	8-6 e		1	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	P	A	A	Flint	Tuffreau et al., 1989; Ameloot-Van der Heijden, 1991; Ameloot-Van de Heijden, 1993	
Beaumetz-les-Loges	Serie	8-6 e		1 lustree	e	e			No	A	A	P?	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Hurtrelle et al., 1972; Tuffreau, 1974; Somme and Tuffreau, 1976; Tuffreau, 1987		
Beaumetz-les-Loges	Serie	8-6 e		1 jaune	e	e			No	A	A	A	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Hurtrelle et al., 1972; Tuffreau 1974; Somme and Tuffreau, 1976; Tuffreau, 1987	
Tillet	Serie	8-6 e		1 blanche	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	De Givenchy, 1911; Bordes, 1954		
Tillet	Serie	8-6 e		1 grise	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	A		A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	De Givenchy, 1911; Bordes, 1954		
Vimy	e	8-6 e		1	e	e			No	A	A	P	A	P		A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Somme and Tuffreau, 1976; Tuffreau, 1974; Tuffreau, 1979		

Mauquenchy	Le Fond de Randillon	N3	8-6 e	l	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary No	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Locht et al., 2013
Le Long Buisson	Guichainville, Le Long-Buisson I, Zone 5 et 6	Serie marron	6- e 5?	l	e	e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary No	A	A	P	A	A	P?	A	P	A	A	A	P	A	Flint	Cliquet dir., 2013 ; Cliquet, 2013

Table 7
Data of South-east French sites from MIS 9 to 6, mapped in Fig. 7. Sites with a secure MIS correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Site	Exact location	Level/ Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative	Context Spatial Human	Faunal	Levallois Pebble chronology	integrity remains : tools	"Acheulean" biface	"Mousterian" biface	Trifacial shaping	Discoid M SSDA	'Others M material	Bibliography									
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	6	9	Late 9	4	ESR on teeth: 362 ± 51 ka (Bahain et al., 2012); ESR on bone: 400 ± 54 ka ESR/UeTh on speleothem: 255e319 ka (Michel et al., 2011); ESR on quartz: 501 ka and ESR on Biostratigraphy speleothem: 293e372 ka (Massaoudi, 1995); UeTh on speleothem: 339 ka and ESR on speleothem: 309 ± 34 ka (Falgueres et al., 1988)					Primary Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	5	9	Late 9	4	ESR on teeth: 111 ka and 161 ka (Massaoudi, 1995); ESR on teeth: 347 ± 65 ka/346 ± 37 ka (Bahain et al., 2012); ESR on bone: 346 ± 37 ka/ speleothem: 293e372 ka (Massaoudi, 1995); UeTh on speleothem: 339 ka and ESR on speleothem: 309 ± 34 ka (Falgueres et al., 1988)					Primary Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	4a	9	Late 9	4	e					Primary Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	3	9/8	Late 9early 8	4	e				Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	2	9/8	Late 9early 8	4	e					Primary Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Orgnac 3	Orgnac l'aven	1	9/8	Late 9early 8	4					Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel et al., 2011, 2012	
Payre	Rompon layer F	8/7	Late 8/early 7	4		ESR/UeTh on teeth: 169 ± 13 ka, TL on flint: 232 ± 15 ka (Bahain, 2009)				ESR/UeTh on speleothem, TIMS on speleothem: 251 ± 25 ka (Valladas et al., 2008)	Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Moncel dir, 2008; Valladas et al., 2008; Bahain, 2009
Payre	Rompon layer G	8/7	Late 8/early 7	4		ESR/U-Th on teeth: 235 ± 18 ka; TL on flint: 231 ± 27 ka (Bahain, 2009				ESR/UeTh on speleothem, TIMS on speleothem: 247 ± 27 ka (Valladas et al., 2008)	Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	Flint	Moncel dir, 2008; Valladas et al., 2008; Bahain, 2009
SainteAnne 1		J2	7	e	3	ESR/UeTh on teeth: 193 ± 22 ka (Raynal dir., 2013); in progress ESR/UeTh on teeth				Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	Flint and volcanic rock	Raynal dir., 2007; Santagata, 2012; Raynal et al., 2013	
SainteAnne 1		J1	7/6	Late 7/early 6	3	e				Biostratigraphy	Primary Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	Flint and volcanic rock	Raynal dir., 2007; Santagata 2012; Raynal et al., 2013	

Lazaret	Nice	UA26	6	e	3	ESR on teeth: 126e205 ka (Michel et al., 2000, 2009)	ESR and UeTh on speleothem: 110 ka < Age <238 ka (Shen, 1985; Yokoyama et al., 1985; Falgueres et al., 1992 ; Bahain et al., 1993; Shen and Gahleb, 1995; Michel et al., 2009, 2011)	Biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	Limestone/ Valensi et al., 2013 flint
Lazaret	Nice	UA25	6	6.3	3	ESR on teeth: 126e205 ka (Michel et al., 2000, 2009)	ESR and UeTh on speleothem: 110 ka < Age <238 ka (Shen, 1985; Yokoyama et al., 1985; Falgueres et al., 1992 ; Bahain et al., 1993; Shen and Gahleb, 1995; Michel et al., 2009, 2011)	Biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	Limestone/ De Lumley et al., 2004 flint
Lazaret	Nice	ensemble III	6	6.2	4	ESR on teeth: 114e125 ka (Michel et al., 2000, 2009)	ESR and UeTh on speleothem: 110 ka < Age <238 ka (Shen, 1985; Yokoyama et al., 1985; Falgueres et al., 1992 ; Bahain et al., 1993; Shen and Gahleb, 1995; Michel et al., 2009, 2011)	Biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	P	Limestone/ Darlas, 1994 flint
Payre	Rompon layer D		6/5	Late 6	4	ESR/UeTh on teeth: 144 ± 11 ka (Bahain, 2009)	ESR/UeTh on speleothem, TIMS on speleothem: 159 ± 10 ka (Valladas et al., 2008)	Biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	P	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint Moncel, dir., 2008; Valladas et al., 2008; Bahain, 2009
Caune de l'Arago		unit IV level C	9-6?	e	2	e	ESR/UeTh on speleothem: 104e151 ka; 215e229 ka; 273e>350 ka (Falgueres et al., 2004)	Biostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	Quartz/ flint Barsky, 2013
Baume Bonne		Phase 2	8/7	Late 8/early 7	2	ESR/UeTh on teeth: 200 ka (Falgueres et al., 1993; Gagnepain, Gaillard, 2005)	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	Chert/flint Gagnepain and Gaillard, 2005
Baume Bonne		Phase 3	6	e	2	ESR/UeTh on teeth: 150 ka (Falgueres et al., 1993; Gagnepain, Gaillard 2005)	e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	Chert/flint Gagnepain and Gaillard, 2005

Site	Precise location	Level/ Layer	MIS	Precise MIS	Value of MIS correlation (x/5)	Direct dating	Indirect dating	Relative chronology	Context	Spatial remains	Human integrity	Faunal remains	Levallois	Pebble tools	"Acheulean" biface	"Mousterian" biface	Trifacial shaping	Blade	Discoid	MPCR/ Quina	PCT	Others	Main raw material	Bibliography		
La Micoque		L2-3	9-8	e	3	ESR on teeth: 332 to 291 ka (Falgueres et al., 1997)	e	e	Secondary	No	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Boeda, 1991; Delpech et al., 1995; Falgu�eres et al., 1997; Guibert et al., 2008	
Petit-Bost		2	9-8	e	5	TL on burnt flint: 248 ± 31 ka; 312 ± 23 ka; 338 ± 43 ka e (Guibert et al., 2006; Bourguignon et al., 2008)		e	Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	A	P	Flint	Lahaye, 2005; Lahaye et al., 2006; Guibert et al., 2006; Bourguignon et al., 2008	
Les Bosses			8	e	3	TL on burnt flint: 250e300 ka; 291 ± 31 (mean 5TL) (Jarry e e et al., 2007)			Secondary	No	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	Quartz	Jarry et al., 2004, 2007; Jarry, 2010	
Pech de l'Aze II		c9	8?	e	3	ESR-EU on teeth: 131 ± 17 ka; ESR-LU: 174.8 ± 22.5 ka e (Gr��n and Stringer, 1991)		e	Primary	No	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Bordes, 1971, 1972, 1984; Boeda, 1991; Gr��n�� and Stringer, 1991; Delpech et al., 1995	
Pech de l'Aze II		c8	8?	e	3	ESR-EU on teeth: 152.5 ± 16.7 ka; ESR-LU: 194.7 ± 19.7 ka e (Gr��n and Stringer, 1991)		e	Primary	No	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Bordes, 1971, 1972, 1984; Boeda, 1991; Gr��n�� and Stringer, 1991; Delpech and Prat, 1995	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		VIII	8/7	e	5	OSL: 246 ± 8 ka (unpublished, com. Brenet)	After other stratigraphic limit with TL and OSL: 220 < d < 195 ± 16 ka (Brenet, 2011)	e	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet, 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	X	8/7	e	3	e U/Th on speleothems: 246 ka (Blackwell and Schwarcz e in Rigaud dir., 1988)			Primary	No	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014	
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	IX	7	Middle 7	3	e	U/Th on speleothems: 208 ± 8 ka (Blackwell and Schwarcz in Rigaud dir., 1988)	e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014	
Barbas I	Creysse	C4	7	Middle 7	5	TL on burnt flint: 239 ± 44 ka (Valladas et al., 1999)	e	e	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Boeda, 1991, 2001; Bo��da et al., 1996, 2004;�� Valladas et al., 1999; Chevrier, 2006	
Cantalouette 1	Creysse	V	7	Middle 7	5	TL on burnt flint: 222.9 ± 20.1 ka (Guibert and Vieillevigne e in Brenet et al. 2008)		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Vieillevigne et al., 2008; Brenet et al., 2008; Brenet, 2011, 2013	
Pech de l'Aze II		c7	7	e	3	ESR-EU on teeth: 156.7 ± 15.1ka; ESR-LU: 193.8 ± 19.1 ka e (Gr��n and Stringer, 1991)		e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Bordes, 1971, 1972, 1984; Boeda, 1991;�� Delpech et al., 1995	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		X	7	Late 7	4	TL on burnt flint: 195 ± 16 ka (Lahaye in Brenet et al., 2008) e		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Combined: flaking and shaping	Flint	Brenet, 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Cantalouette 1	Creysse	IVb	7-6	e	3	e	After other stratigraphic limit: with TL and OSL: 165 ± 13 < d < 222.9 ± 20.1 ka (Brenet, 2011)		Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet et al., 2008; Brenet, 2011, 2013	
Petit-Bost		1	7 or 6	e	3	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Lahaye, 2005; Lahaye et al., 2006; Guibert et al., 2006; Bourguignon et al., 2008	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		VIIb	6	Early 6	4	TL on burnt flint: 187 ± 21 ka (Lahaye in Brenet et al., 2008) e		e	Secondary	No	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet, 2008 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		VIIa	6	Early 6	4	e	After other stratigraphic limit: with TL and OSL: 185 ± 23 < d < 195 ± 16 ka (Brenet, 2011)		Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	A	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	Combined: flaking and shaping	Flint	Brenet, 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		VI	6	Early 6	4	TL on burnt flint: 185 ± 23 ka (Lahaye in Brenet et al., 2008) e		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet, 2008 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		V	6	Early 6	4	TL on burnt flint: 183 ± 20 ka (Lahaye in Brenet et al., 2008) e		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet, 2008 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Combe Brune Creysse 2		II	6	Early 6	4	e	After other stratigraphic limit: with TL and OSL: 173 ± 9 ka < age < 183 ± 20 ka (Brenet, 2011)		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	A	Flint	Brenet, 2011, 2013; Frouin et al., 2014	
Barbas I	Creysse	C3base	6	Middle 6	5	TL on burnt flint: 146 ± 29 ka, 147 ± 28 ka (Valladas et al., e 1999)		e	Primary	Yes	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Boeda, 1991, 2001; Bo��da et al., 1996, 2004;�� Valladas et al., 1999	
Cantalouette 2	Creysse	Base (Grain de sel)	6	Middle 6	3	TL on burnt flint: 165 ± 13 ka (Vieillevigne et al. 2008; e Guibert et al. 2008)		e	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	P	Flint	Bourguignon et al., 2008	
Combe Brune 3	Creysse	I	6	Middle 6	4	TL on burnt flint: 156 ± 12 ka (Viellevigne in Brenet et al., e 2008)		e	Secondary	No	A	A	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	Combined: flaking and shaping	Flint	Brenet et al., 2008; Brenet, 2011, 2013	
Pech de l'Aze II		c6	6	e	3	RPE on teeth: 162e130 ka; ESR-LU: 188.4 ± 22.2 ka (Gr��n e and Stringer, 1991)		e	Primary	No	A	P	P?	P?	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Bordes, 1971, 1972, 1984; Boeda, 1991;�� Delpech and Prat, 1995	
Pech de l'Aze II		c5	6	Middle 6	3	RPE on teeth: 146e128 ka; ESR-LU: 171.6 ± 18.7 ka (Gr��n e and Stringer, 1991)		e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Bordes 1971, 1972, 1984; Boeda 1991;�� Delpech and Prat, 1995	
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	VIII	6	Middle 6	3	e	U/Th on speleothems: 142 p 130/-68 ka (Blackwell and Schwarcz in Rigaud dir., 1988)	e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014	
Combe Grenal		54	6	e	3	e		e	Biochronology	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	Flint	Bordes, 1955, 1971, 1972, 1984; Bordes and Prat, 1965; Bordes et al., 1966; Turq, 1992; Delpech and Prat, 1995; Turq et al., 2010	
Combe Grenal		56	6	e	3	e		e	Biochronology	Primary	No	A	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	A	A	P	Flint	Bordes 1955, 1971, 1972, 1984; Bordes and Prat, 1965; Bordes et al., 1966; Turq 1992; Delpech and Prat, 1995; Turq et al., 2010

Abri Suard	La Chaise-	53 de-Vouthon	6	e	4	e	U/Th on speleothems: 185 ± 30 ka (Schwarcz and Debenath, 1979)	e	Primary	?	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Debenath, 1974a,b ; Blackwell et al., 1983; Delagnes, 1992a,b	
Abri Suard	La Chaise-	52 de-Vouthon	6	e	4	e		e	Primary	?	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Debenath, 1974a,b ; Blackwell et al., 1983; Delagnes, 1992a,b	
Abri Suard	La Chaise-	51 de-Vouthon	6	e	4		TL: 126 ± 15 ka (Schvoerer et al., 1977)	e	Primary	?	A	P	P	P	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Debenath, 1974a,b ; Blackwell et al., 1983; Delagnes, 1990,1992a,b	
Abri Suard	La Chaise-	50 de-Vouthon	6	e	4	e		e	Primary	?	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Debenath, 1974a,b ; Blackwell et al., 1983; Delagnes, 1992a,b	
Coudoulous I		Niv. inf.	6	e	3		ESR on teeth: 200e130 ka (Jaubert et al., 2005)	U/Th on speleothems: 200e130 ka (Jaubert et al., 2005)	Biochronology	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Quartz	Jaubert et al., 2005
La Borde	Livernon		6	e	3	e		e	Biochronology	Primary	Yes	A	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	Quartz	Jaubert et al., 1990
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	IV	6	Late 6	3		TL on burnt flint: 123 to 140 ka (Huxtable and Aitken in Rigaud dir., 1988)	e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste, 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez, et al., 2014
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	V	6	Late 6	3	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste, 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	VI	6	Late 6	3	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste, 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014
Vaufrey	Cenac et Saint Julien	VII	6	Late 6	3	e		U/Th on speleothems: 168 ± 10 ka (Blackwell and Schwarcz in Rigaud dir., 1988)	e	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	Flint	Geneste, 1985, 1988; Rigaud dir., 1988; Hernandez et al., 2014
Croix de Canard	Neuvic	3	8-6?	e	2	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	Flint	Detrain et al., 2005
Les Pendus	Creysse		7 or 6	e	2	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Secondary	No	A	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	Flint	Guichard and Guichard, 1966; Boeda, 1991,€ 2001; Garreau, 1998, 2000; Chevrier, 2006; Folgado et al., 2005
Les Tares		1	6?	Early 6?	1			After other stratigraphic limit: 150 ka < age <200 ka (Delpech and Prat, 1995)	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	A	A	P	A	A	A	A	A	P	A	A	Flint	Rigaud and Texier, 1981; Bertran and Texier, 1990; Delpech and Prat, 1995; Geneste and Plisson, 1996; Faivre et al., 2010
Coupe Gorge	Montmaurin		6	e	1	e		e	Lithostratigraphy	Primary	No	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	Quartzite/flint	Gaillard, 1982

correlation (index 3, 4 and 5; cf. Section 3) are in bold, sites with an uncertain MIS correlation (index 0, 1 and 2; cf. Section 3) are in italics.

Palaeolithic investigations in the Netherlands (Roebroeks, 1988; De Loecker, 2006)" (Verpoorte et al., 2016).

Excavations uncovered a total of eight archaeological findspots, together with a series of test pits and section finds (in total 1577 m²). They represent several open-air site occupations (9 archaeological layers; Table 2). The Saalian lithic artefacts were recovered from two distinct major find levels (within local Unit IV), which are considered contemporaneous in Pleistocene terms (cf. Roebroeks, 1988, 133; De Loecker, 2006, 230): i.e. the lower Subunit IV-B (Sites B, C and G) and the upper Subunit IV-C-B (Sites A, D, F, H, K and N). Terrace and loess stratigraphy, as well as the mammal and mollusc biostratigraphical evidence, indicate an intra-Saalian age, prior to MIS 6, for the archaeological levels (Van Kolfschoten and Roebroeks, 1985; van Kolfschoten et al., 1993). The latter, together with TL and ESR dating evidence, allows the reconstruction of a secure palaeoenvironmental and chronostratigraphic framework and correlates the Unit IV find distributions with the intra-Saalian Belvédère-Interglacial, corresponding to the MIS 7 (243e191 ka, after Lisiecki and Raymo, 2005). However, amino acid racemization dating of Corbicula shells from the Interglacial deposits as well as elements of the mollusc fauna suggest an earlier, MIS 9, age for the Belvédère-Interglacial and its associated archaeology (Meijer and Cleveringa, 2009).

The investigation of extensive refitting programs, detailed technological and typological analyses, the study of spatial patterning, use-wear analyses, etc. give a very detailed behavioural sketch of the eight 'scatters and patches' (cf. Isaac, 1981a,b; Roebroeks et al., 1992; De Loecker, 2006; De Loecker and Roebroeks, 2012) which were preserved in primary archaeological contexts: i.e. a series of fine-grained sediments deposited by the Middle Pleistocene meandering river Maas during MIS 7 (or possibly MIS 9). Variations in the used core-approach are well documented at Belvédère: Sites F, H and K are dominated by a disc and/or discoidal core-approach, while at Site N and especially at Site C the presence of Levallois products is significant.

No Saalian human remains were discovered at Maastricht or elsewhere on the Dutch mainland. Faunal remains were present and preserved at Maastricht-Belvédère Sites B (few) G, N and C (poorly preserved for Sites N and C).

The study of the early Middle Palaeolithic of the Netherlands is confronted with limitations of poor quality data in terms of site integrity and chronology, except for Maastricht situated in the loess region of southern Limburg, very close to well-known Belgian sites (Fig. 3). Large numbers of lithic artefacts have been found in different localities in the Central Netherlands, here grouped under the term of Rhenen industry. They remain in secondary position in deposits which were already present when the area was covered by glaciers during MIS 6 (Table 2). "Further to the north artefacts do occur 'geological in situ', i.e. in the ice-pushed ridges in the Central Netherlands and on the Drenthe Frisian till plateau in the northernmost part of the country (Deeben et al., 2010), but primary archaeological in situ situations have yet to be discovered. During the Pleistocene, the northern Netherlands, as part of the Norddeutsches Tiefland, was repeatedly modified and bulldozed by glaciers. The most prominent features, the Drenthe-Frisian (Glacial) till plateau and the ice-pushed ridges in the central and eastern part of the country were mainly formed between c.170 and 140 ka during the Drenthe glaciation (MIS 6)" (Verpoorte et al., 2016).

An overview of Middle Palaeolithic research in the Netherlands is provided by Verpoorte et al. (2016), and in the two monographs dedicated to Maastricht-Belvédère (Roebroeks, 1988; De Loecker, 2006).

4.3. Belgium

Whereas early excavations at a number of Belgian sites now attributed to the early Middle Palaeolithic (i.e. Liege- Sainte-Walburge, Mesvin terrace, Saint-Symphorien-Carriere Helin) only provided a very limited chronostratigraphic control, renewed investigations at some of these sites since the 1950s in addition to excavations at newly discovered sites have improved our understanding of this particular time period. An exhaustive overview of the Belgian Palaeolithic record

shows that a total of 13 sites, comprising 28 archaeological levels, can be attributed to the early Middle Palaeolithic (Fig. 3; Table 3). The bulk of data comes from open-air sites, although limited evidence suggests that humans might also have been present in some of the caves/shelters in the Meuse basin. Apart from Tooz-Grotte Walou level DI (Pirson and Di Modica, 2011), the correlation of the latter type of sites with the isotopic record remains problematic as secure absolute or relative dating evidence is lacking. For some of these contexts (Moha-Grotte de l'Hermitage, Huccorgne-Abri Sandron and Tooz-Grotte Walou level DII), an attribution to the MIS 9e6 interval can, however, not be excluded (Van Peer, 2001).

Open air-sites with good stratigraphic and reliable dating evidence are present in two geographic areas: the Haine River basin near Mons (Mesvin IV, Petit-Spiennes III, Saint-Symphorien-Carriere Helin, Masnuy-Saint-Jean-Le Rissori) as well as the eastern part of the Belgian loess belt between Liege and Maastricht (Kesselt-Op de Schans, Veldwezelt-Hezerwater, Kesselt-Nelissen, Liege- Mont Saint-Martin). There, the regional chronostratigraphic framework incorporates data from river terrace sequences, loess stratigraphy, U/Th or luminescence dating and/or heavy mineral analysis (Meijs, 2002; Pirson et al., 2009; Pirson and Di Modica, 2011; Meijs et al., 2012). While correlations with the isotopic record are overall reliable, attributions to substage levels are rarely possible (Table 3).

Although most of the archaeological remains dating to the MIS 9e6 time frame are in secondary position, a few primary contexts are available as well, for example at Kesselt-Op de Schans (level 3) and in case a Saalian age estimate is correct it is possibly also at Veldwezelt-Hezerwater (levels VLL and VLB, Meijs, 2011) and Otrange-Gisement paleolithique (level L.S.).

Unlike the late Middle Palaeolithic record in Belgium, no human remains have been found at any of these sites. Faunal remains, on the other hand, have been preserved in several alluvial (Mesvin IV, Petit-Spiennes III, Mesvin terrace) and karstic (basal levels of Walou Cave) contexts. Climatic and environmental proxies are overall rather scarce.

Regional overviews have been successively compiled by Ulrix-Closset (1975, 1981), Otte (1983), Cahen (1984), Van Peer (2001), Di Modica (2010), Pirson and Di Modica (2011) and Van Baelen and Ryssaert (2011).

Two sites are of particular importance in the debate concerning the onset of the Middle Palaeolithic in north-western Europe (Van Baelen, 2014). Data from Kesselt-Op de Schans (level 3) and Mesvin IV both suggest that typically Middle Palaeolithic assemblages were produced from the beginning of MIS 8 onwards. Whereas at Mesvin IV some evidence suggesting the continuing use of bifacial technology is present, such indications are absent at Kesselt-Op de Schans (level 3), where a large number of refits document the variability in lithic technology alongside artefact transport.

4.4. Germany

The German EMP record is very heterogeneous, and only a few sites (13 sites 1982, 25), Essen-Vogelheim (Bosinski, 1982, 24; Bosinski and Richter, 1997, 5),



Fig. 4. Distribution map of German sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 4. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

with 20 assemblages; Fig. 4; Table 4) yielded both archaeological finds (artefacts and possibly faunal remains) and an approximate chronological estimation (stratigraphic and environmental information and/or radiometric dating). Only these relatively reliable sites are listed here (Table 4), thus excluding a huge number of remaining sites (currently lacking indicative artefact assemblages or sufficiently dated stratigraphic contexts), such as Karlich Jb (€ Bosinski and Richter, 1997, 5), Hochdahl (Bosinski and Richter, 1997, 5), Mülheim (Bosinski,

Essen-Werden (Bosinski, 1982, 25), Bielefeld-Lutterstrasse (Bosinski, 1967, 110), Arnum (Bosinski, 1967, 98), Alfeld (Bosinski, 1967, 98), Gronau (Bosinski, 1967, 99), Beulshausen (Bosinski, 1967, 98) for western and north-western Germany, Lüchow-Dannenberg (Steguweit, 1998) for northern Germany and Zehmen (Grahmann, 1955, 530), Leipzig-Wahren (Eissmann, 1983, 47), Leipzig-Lindenau (Eissmann, 1983, 47), Leipzig-Leutzsch (Eissmann, 1983, 47), Naumburg (Toepfer, 1981, 71), Barleben (Weber, 1995, 106), Bertingen (Weber, 1995, 106), Gerwisch (Weber, 1995, 106), Magdeburg-

Rothensee (Weber, 1995, 106), Magdeburg-Neustadt (Weber, 1995, 106), Magdeburg-Salbke (Weber, 1995, 106), Eythra for central Germany (Weber, 1995, 106). Additionally, a large number of surface sites have been attributed to the EMP on typological grounds (for example 12 sites in Hessen, central-western Germany; Fiedler, 1994, 37). All of these sites must be considered as EMP candidates, and many of them may deliver more information in the future.

All sites are open-air localities, except the collapsed cave of Hunas.

The chronostratigraphic framework had to be corrected:

- a) The Holsteinian Interglacial has turned out to be 300,000 years old and not 400,000 as previously thought. It corresponds to MIS 9 and not to MIS 11 according to the new age model for Bossel/Holstein and the key palynological eponymous Holsteinian site (Geyh and Krubetschek, 2012). As a consequence, Bilzingsleben and Schoningen (the end of the Lower Palaeolithic in Germany) are of MIS 9 and MIS 9/8 age respectively. They display close palynological links to the Holsteinian vegetation sequence. Unfortunately, the new evidence has since been widely ignored, and falsified age estimations for the Holsteinian have even been maintained in the INQUA chronological table of the Quaternary.
- b) In Loess sequences, the one Interglacial soil \neq one MIS Interglacial correspondence is no longer valid, and soil counts (Last Interglacial soil, second-last Interglacial soil, third-last Interglacial soil etc.) have since turned out to be unusable if they are not matched by supporting evidence from independent variables (magnetostratigraphy, chemical fingerprint comparison, radiometric dating etc.). At the important key stratigraphy of Rheindahlen, the MIS 7 Interglacial is represented by three soils instead of one: the Wickrath-soil (MIS 7.5), the Rheindahlen-soil (MIS 7.3) and the Erkelenz-soil (MIS 7.1, Schirmer, 2002, 31e47; Iking, 2002, 82). That means the whole sequence (including all archaeological horizons) represents MIS 7 and perhaps the onset of MIS 6, and not several climatic cycles from the Holsteinian to the Weichselian (cf. Thissen, 2006). Indeed, the latter cycle is totally absent from the Rheindahlen sequence.
- c) Strata counting also caused errors to the central German moraine chronology. Two major glacier advances of the Saalian (Drenthe and Warthe) have been rejected to match the MIS 8 and MIS 6 cold maxima, since both have been radiometrically dated to around 150e130,000 BP (i.e. MIS 6; Litt et al., 2007). For Markkleeberg, with its stratigraphic position under the Drenthe moraine, this makes an early MIS 6 date no less probable than the previous attribution to MIS 8 (Schafer et al., 2003), which has since been correlated with the "Fuhne" glaciation (Litt et al., 2007) and a Glacial stage between the "Elster" (MIS 10) and "Saale sensu stricto" (MIS 6) glaciations.
- d) New radiometric dates changed the position of some important sites: Ehringsdorf has been confirmed by recent ESR dates to belong to the MIS 7 Interglacial (Schüler, 2007). Recent research at Neumark-Nord (basin 1 and basin 2), however, lead to the correction of the former MIS 7 attribution in favour of a MIS 5e age for the locality (Serangeli et al., 2012).

The recent attribution of the Hunas sequence (Rosendahl et al., 2006) probably relied on erroneous radiometric dating of the underlying sediments as all of the other data argue for a MIS 6 age of the sequence (new dates are in preparation).

Four sites have delivered human remains attributed to *Homo steinheimensis* (Steinheim), early Neanderthals (Ehringsdorf, Wannen) and of controversial attribution (Hunas).

The listed sites (Table 4) show relatively good preservation, particularly Ehringsdorf (a travertine site with abundant fauna and plant remains), Schoningen and Neumark-Nord (lakeside localities), and Hunas (limestone environment with excellent bone preservation). Primary or secondary position and spatial integrity cannot always be fully evaluated due to past excavation

methods, except at Schoningen, Neumark-Nord and, partially, Hunas. The location of archaeological finds has also been recorded for Ariendorf, Rheindahlen, Schweinskopf, Tonchesberg and Wannen, although their relation to the find-bearing sediments is at times debatable (e.g. Rheindahlen).

Palaeoenvironmental reconstructions from the lakeside locations of Schoningen and Neumark-Nord. Ehringsdorf and Hunas also yielded abundant environmental data. At other sites fauna was only partially preserved (e.g. Markkleeberg), and some assemblages totally lack any faunal or botanical remains (Rheindahlen).

Excavations are currently ongoing at Hunas, Schoningen and Neumark-Nord whereas research in the volcano region of the Neuwied basin (Schweinskopf, Tonchesberg, Wannen) and in the Rhineland (Rheindahlen) discontinued some time ago and new techniques, such as micromorphological analysis to evaluate the integrity of find-bearing sediments, have not yet been applied there.

Given all these aforementioned problems, very few EMP sites are currently well excavated, well dated and well published. Ariendorf may be the earliest EMP in Germany (Turner et al., 1997), Markkleeberg is traditionally cited as a reference site illustrating an alleged transition from the Lower to the Middle Palaeolithic although the reliability of the assemblage and its chronological position (8 or 6?) is questionable and, generally, the existence of a transition is still open to discussion (Weber, 1995). Schoningen will probably produce much more detailed insights into the MIS 9/8 interface and thus contribute to the question of Middle Palaeolithic origins (Serangeli et al., 2012). Ehringsdorf (Schüler, 2004) and Rheindahlen (Schirmer, 2002) are currently cited as regional MIS 7 reference sites (but see Thissen, 2006), but modern investigations are needed to firmly establish the association between the archaeological remains and the surrounding sediments. MIS 6 is probably best represented in the Middle Rhine volcanos (Bosinski and Richter, 1997), but the Hunas collapsed cave in Bavaria is the site displaying the best preservation of organic remains (Rosendahl et al., 2006).

Bearing in mind all of these restrictions, regional syntheses are available for western Germany (Bosinski and Richter, 1997) and central Germany (Weber, 1995), and include many debatable sites. The state of the chronological knowledge was summarized some years ago (Richter, 2011).

The German Middle Palaeolithic begins in MIS 8 and is well documented at the Ariendorf 1 site (age estimation c. 250 ka), based on a regional, radiometrically dated tephra chronology (Richter, 2011). Ariendorf yielded an in situ Levallois lithic assemblage along with faunal remains representative of the cold steppe. 4.5. North-eastern France

Up until now, north-eastern France has yielded 30 sites encompassing 57 archaeological layers for the 337e130 ka interval (Table 5). All these sites are open-air sites, apart from the Jurassic cave of Gigny, located in the extreme southeast of the zone (Fig. 5). However, the contexts leading to the preservation of the sedimentary deposits and archaeological layers are varied. They are made up of fluvial terraces (Abbeville, Ailly-sur-Noye, Argoeuvres, Bagarre, Biache-

which were often collected from erosion gravel, and to which we can only allocate a minimum age. At some of these sites, the presence of a Bt type luvisol attributed to the Eemian located above the levels is often the only reliable chronological marker in the sequence. The levels are then characterized by different researchers on the basis of the typological and technological criteria of the industries. These levels cannot currently be included in overall considerations

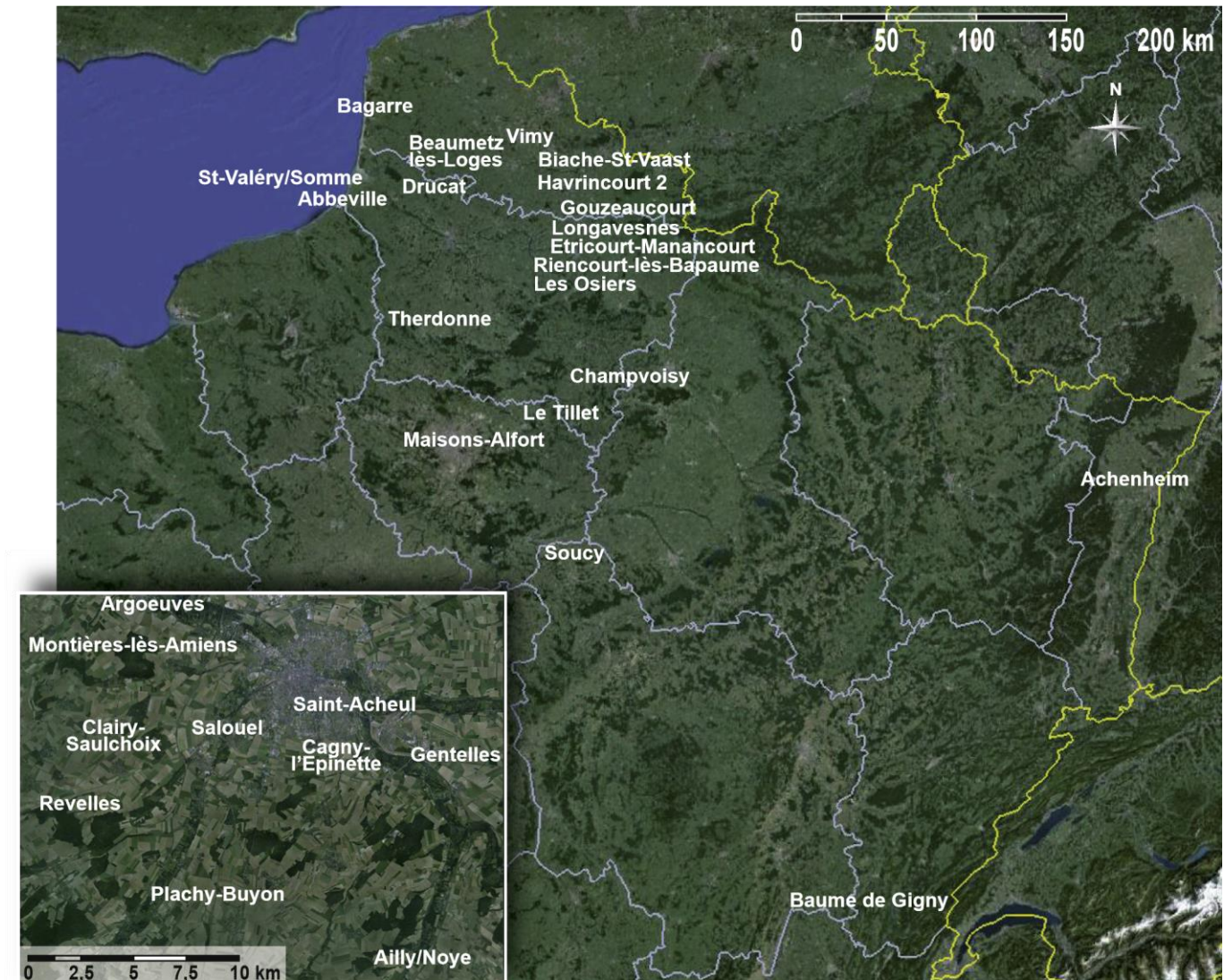


Fig. 5. Distribution map of North-east French sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 5. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Saint-Vaast, Cagny-l'Épinette, Drucat, Ferme de l'Épinette, Maisons-Alfort, Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme, Salouel, Soucy), sinkholes (Clair-Saulchoix, Gentelles, Gouzeaucourt, Longavesnes, Revelles), or loessic slopes. (Achenheim, Bapaume-lès Osiers, Beaumetz-lès-Loges, Champvoisy, Etricourt-Manancourt, Havrincourt 2, Montières-lès-Amiens, Plachy-Buyon, Riencourt-lès-Bapaume, Therdonne, Le Tillet, Vimy).

Overall, the resolution of the chronological setting in the region is satisfactory as about 60% of the occupations can confidently be correlated to an isotopic stage (Table 5). Reference sites (including the sites of Cagny, Biache-Saint-Vaast, Soucy, Therdonne and Etricourt-Manancourt) enable us to refine the chronological setting to the scale of isotopic sub-stages, mainly by using sedimentary sequences with finely recorded sedimentary litho-stratigraphic sequences that can be correlated between them, to the system of stepped alluvial terraces and to direct and indirect biochronological dates. The chronological setting is deemed to be unreliable or imprecise for 23 levels of the corpus. This can be explained by the secondary position of most of these lithic industries,

if the aim, like here, is to establish a general picture based on reliable chronological data.

The chronostratigraphic framework of the northeast of France is largely founded on lithostratigraphic observations and the study of fluvial stepped terraces. The chronological context of the sequences and occupations is reinforced by radiometric dates, namely thermoluminescence on heated flint, IRSL on loess and ESR on bones. The overall regional summary for the Saalian is rather crude in comparison to that of the Weichselian (Locht et al., 2016), but is continuously refined by new discoveries, at times with considerable headway, like for the recent discovery of Etricourt-Manancourt (Herisson et al., 2016).

Only layer IIA at Biache-Saint-Vaast has yielded human remains, including the cranial remains of two young individuals ascribed to "Early Neanderthals" (Vandermeersch, 1978; Dean et al., 1998; Hublin, 1998; Rougier, 2003; Guipert, 2005).

Over half of the recorded archaeological levels have yielded material in primary position but only several of these have been spatially preserved. Faunal remains are frequent in fluvial contexts, but are rarely accompanied by other proxies. With these elements, it is possible to partially reconstruct a regional palaeoenvironmental framework for the Saalian, but with abundant records in certain localities.

The current corpus is based on a long process of data accumulation derived from discoveries made from the 19th century until today. Two regional summaries have been established including the early phase of the Middle Palaeolithic, in 1987 by A. Tuffreau and in 2012 by D. Herisson. The region includes reference sites for the end of the Lower Palaeolithic and the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic, such as the Cagny complex, Biache-Saint-Vaast, Soucy, Therdonne and Etrécourt-Manancourt. These sites with high chronological resolution provide capital evidence of the onset of the Middle Palaeolithic and make a considerable contribution to the identification of all the facets of this key period.

4.6. North-western France

Twenty-two sites are currently referenced in the northwest of France, corresponding to at least 30 occupations (archaeological levels; Table 6; Fig. 6). Most of these are open-air sites, either in a coastal context associated with marine beaches (Barneville, Digulleville, Jobourg, Equeurdreville, Gatteville, Pleneuf-Val-André, Les Gastines), or in a continental plateau context (Ranville, Saint-Brice-sous-Rânes, Mauquenchy), or at times in a karst-related context (Ranville, Guichainville/Le Vieil-Evreux). Other occupations are in a fluvial context (Saint-Pierre-les-Elbeuf, Tancarville, Tourville-la-Rivière). Finally, several sites near the coastline were implanted at the base of granitic rock faces (Fermanville, Saint-Germain-des-Vaux, Gouberville).

The degree of resolution of the chronostratigraphic context is variable, with eleven occurrences beyond the isotopic stage, fifteen in the isotopic stage frame and only one corresponding to an isotopic sub-stage. Most of the chronostratigraphic frame is constructed on lithostratigraphic observations, terrace stepping and marine beaches. However, many sites underwent

radiometric dates by TL on heated flint, OSL on sediments and ESR on dental enamel in several cases (Table 6).

The site of Tourville-la-Rivière yielded three long bones from the arm of the same individual ascribed to the “Neanderthal lineage” (Faivre et al., 2014).

The preservation of the archaeological levels depends on the structuring elements of the sites. In this way, natural “traps” favoured the conservation of superficial formations near cliffs (Tancarville, Saint-Pierre-les-Elbeuf), implantations at the base of cliffs (Port-Racine, Le Rozel or Mondree), occupations in granite passages or hollows (Gel etan, Port-Pignot or Gouberville) and the conservation of archaeological levels in sinkholes (Grossoeuvre and Guichainville/Le Vieil-Evreux). Eight archaeological levels are in primary position, seventeen in secondary position (Table 6). Among those in primary position, only six levels are conducive to spatial analysis. The conservation of organic matter is very variable with faunal remains conserved at six sites and charcoal at a single site. The level of reconstruction of the palaeoenvironmental and regional palaeogeographical context is generally “partial” and “fragmentary”.

Research results for Normandy (Upper and Lower) are satisfactory on account of renewed work on sites discovered a long time ago and an active research team as part of the Collective Research Project group. This work has led to the revision of formerly excavated and studied sites and the acquisition of new data with surveys, excavations and radiometric dating. Brittany is somewhat lagging behind,



Fig. 6. Distribution map of North-west French sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 6. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

but the formation of the PCR in 2015 led by M. Laforge and A.-L. Ravon should give new impetus to research at Rennes.

The reference sites for the northwest of France include the sites of Fermanville/Port-Pignot, Guichainville/Le Vieil-Evreux, Ranville, Saint-Germain-des-Vaux/Gel etan and Tourville-la-Rivière. Recent overviews have been published for Normandy (Cliquet and Lautridou, 2009; Cliquet, 2013a,b) and the Brittany peninsula (Monnier, 1982, 2006).

The main contribution of north-western France to the debate on the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic concerns the conservation of habitat conservation structures at several sites. The early phase of the Middle Palaeolithic is well evidenced from 230 ka onwards at Ranville and at Tourville from 220,000 years.

4.7. South-eastern France

Six sites have yielded sequences with occupations from the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic, with at least 17 distinct occupation levels (Table 7). They are spread out between the Massif Central, the Rhone valley, the Alpes de Haute Provence and Alpes-Maritimes and the eastern limits of the Pyrenees. They are all relatively deep cavities or rock shelters with varied

dimensions, located on plateaus or on valley edges. Some of these cavities are former collapsed sinkholes (Fig. 7).

All these sites have been dated by (single or multiple) radiometric methods on varied supports, such as bone, teeth, burnt flint, speleothems or tephra (ESR-U/Th, TL, TMS, RPE). In some cases,

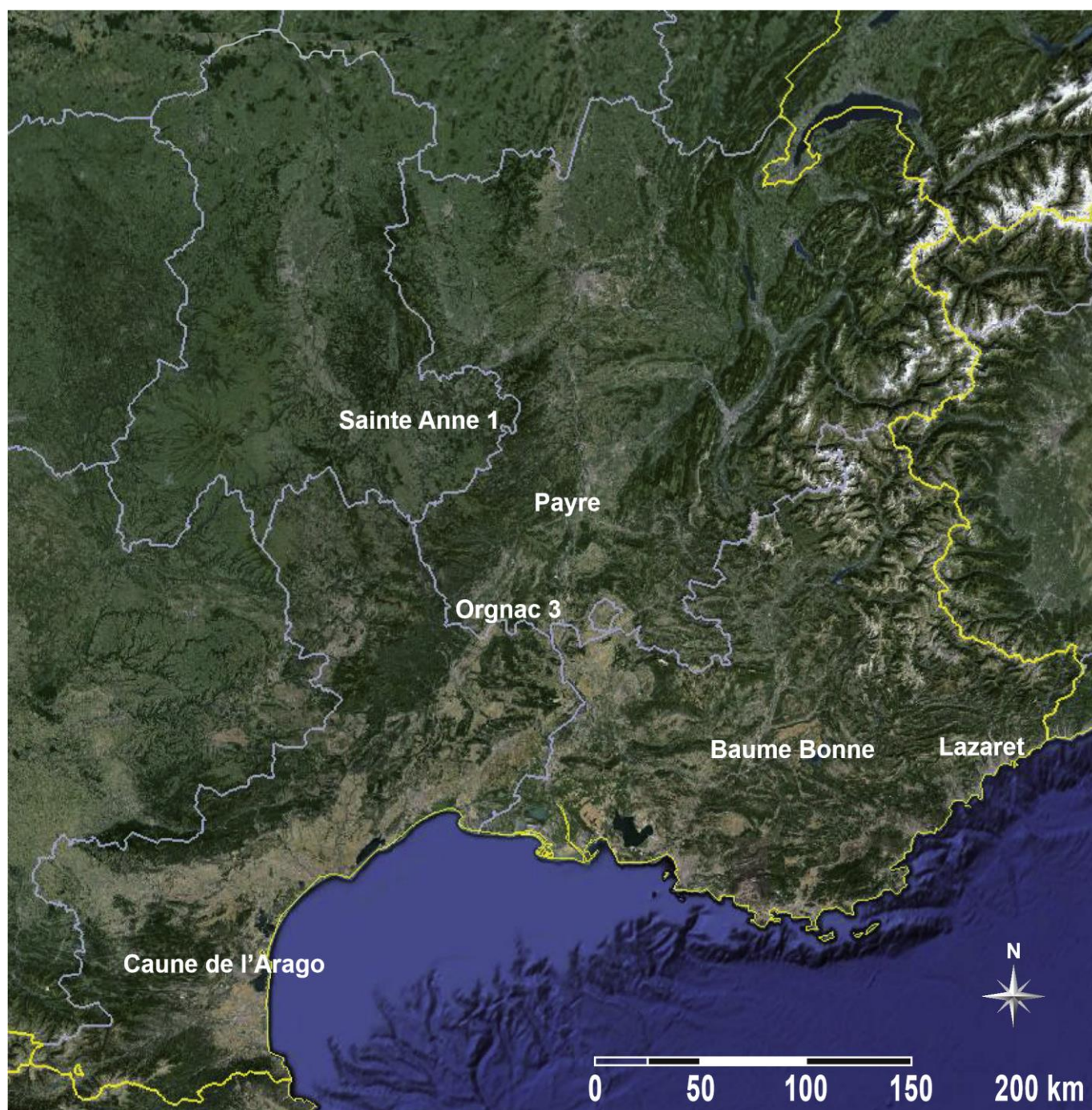


Fig. 7. Distribution map of South-east French sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 7. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

the sediments were directly dated (OSL). The degree of resolution is the isotopic stage, as is generally the case in a karstic context. Only the tephra can be linked to volcanic eruptions, thereby providing a higher resolution (upper level of Orgnac 3). The chronostratigraphic framework is based on radiometric dating and biostratigraphic data (large mammals, rodents).

Three sites have yielded human remains: Lazaret (several levels), Orgnac 3 (levels 6 and 5b) and Payre (all complexes), made up of teeth, cranial and mandible fragments. They are attributed to *Homo Neanderthalensis* (Lazaret) or pre-Neanderthals (Payre, Orgnac 3: Moncel and Condemi, 2007; Moncel dir., 2008; Condemi et al., 2010).

The archaeological material is in primary position and the state of preservation is variable: very good at Lazaret (complex 2 with distinct AU) and at Arago, average at Saint-Anne I, Payre and Orgnac 3 (palimpsest in cavities with taphonomic processes). The fauna is systematically present but not always well-preserved. The level of palaeoenvironmental reconstruction varies from site to site; it is fragmentary at the Baume Bonne and partial for all the other sites.

The data come from early excavations (Orgnac 3, Baume Bonne), or more recent campaigns (Payre, Saint-Anne I, Arago, Lazaret). The most informative site is Orgnac 3 with levels dated from MIS 9 and the beginning of MIS 8 with the appearance of Levallois debitage. This enables us to quantify the emergence of Middle Palaeolithic type behaviour from a technical and subsistence stance.

Over the past twenty years, frequent regional overviews have been published (Moncel, 1999, 2003; Moncel et al., 2005, 2011, 2012; Moncel dir., 2008; Fontana et al., 2013). These summaries have placed the beginning of the transition between the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic at the conjunction of MIS 9 and 8, namely on account of Orgnac 3. These facts are based on technical and subsistence criteria (cf. articles): operational sequences, duration and specialization of occupations, carcass processing, disappearance of bifaces. The other sites enable us to assess the development of these parameters between MIS 8 and 6.

4.8. South-western France

For the early Middle Palaeolithic in the southwest of France, 18 sufficiently well-documented and representative sites were integrated into the database, comprising 41 archaeological levels (Table 8; Fig. 8). Among these sites, six are in karstic contexts e caves, shelters or collapsed swallow holes e and contain up to 7 successive archaeo-stratigraphic units. The twelve others are openair occupations e in plains, on alluvial ledges, or on plateaus e some over several hundred square metres, sometimes stratified in former sinkholes.

There is still some incertitude as to the chrono-stratigraphic position of the levels from Tares and Pendus, as they have not undergone direct dating (Guichard and Guichard, 1966; Delpech et al., 1995). The other 39 levels from the corpus were coherently chronologically positioned using relative chronology; such as Combe Grenal and La Borde (using biochronology), Croix de Canard, two levels from Vaufray and one from Cantalouette 1 (using chrono-stratigraphy), or dated by different radiometric methods (ESR, U/Th, TL or OSL) (Rigaud dir., 1988; Jaubert et al., 1990; Delpech and Prat, 1995; Detrain et al., 2005; Brenet et al., 2006). Some sites were correlated to MIS 9 to 6 with a satisfactory level of reliability, such as Coudoulous, La Micoque, Les Bosses, Pech de l'Aze II, Petit Bost and others were more precisely dated, such as Suard, Barbas I, the lower levels from Vaufray, Cantalouette 1 (level V) and Cantalouette 2, Combe Brune 2 and 3 (Schwoerer et al., 1977; Schwarcz and Debenath, 1979; Blackwell et al., 1983; Grün et al., 1991; Boeda et al., 1996; Folgado et al., 2005; Jaubert et al., 2005; Falgueres et al., 1997; Lahaye, 2005; Jarry et al., 2007; Brenet et al., 2008; Guibert et al., 2008; Brenet, 2011; Frouin et al., 2014; Hernandez et al., 2014).

Several sites located in the Pyrenean foothills, correlated to after isotopic stage 9, were not included in the corpus due to their strong affinities with the Acheulean Pyrenean-Garonne techno-complex. This applies to the lithic complexes from Duclos, Romenteres, Raspide 2 and Coupe Gorge (Gaillard, 1982, 1983; Colonge et al., 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Lelouvier et al., 2012; Jarry and Lelouvier, 2014).

When geo-archaeological studies have been carried out on the sites retained here, they reveal very varied degrees of disturbance, depending on the palaeo-topographic contexts and postdepositional phenomena. Consequently, few faunal assemblages are well preserved, which confines palaeo-environmental interpretations to a regional scale. The rare sites with abundant and well-preserved faunal assemblages are La Borde and the stratified sites of Coudoulous, Vaufray, Suard, Combe Grenal, and Pech de l'Aze II. The only site of the corpus yielding Neanderthal human remains is Abri Suard with 52 cranial or mandible remains with archaic features from level 51 (Debenath, 1974a,b, Debenath, 1989).

In addition, the technological, functional and economic studies initiated in the 1980s and 1990s on the lithic industries from Vaufray, Combe Grenal, Coudoulous, Suard and Barbas for example, and those carried out more recently on assemblages from open-air sites, such as Cantalouette 1, Combe Brune 2 and 3, Croix de Canard and Les Bosses, have broadened our understanding of human behaviour during the early Middle Palaeolithic from the scale of a site to a wider scale of procurement, subsistence and circulation. Is it ultimately possible to position a chronological stage based on the lithic industries from the southwest, with their Middle Palaeolithic techno-complexes, varied productions methods and associated tools? It is more pertinent to assume that increasingly complex technological and social behaviours e including the anticipated management of materials and artefacts over increasingly vast territories e develops during the course of the progressive settlement of Aquitaine by the first Neanderthals from the beginning of MIS 8: such as at Les Bosses and Petit Bost with the emergence and the mastery of Levallois debitage.

Among the monographs or regional summaries focusing on the early Middle Palaeolithic in the southwest, we can (non-exhaustively) cite the work carried out in the 1980s and 1990s on the sites of Charente, Dordogne and the Lot (Jaubert, 1984; Rigaud, 1988; Delagnes, 1992a,b; Turq, 1992; Delpech et al., 1995) or more recent analyses of the northern Aquitaine and Midi-Pyrenean techno-complexes (Djema, 2008; Jarry, 2010; Brenet et al., 2014).

5. Discussions and conclusions

Working on a broad scale, in this paper we have brought together extant data to assess the state of current research on the emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic. The regional overviews show how different the record, and consequently our knowledge of human occupation, is between MIS 9 to 6 in each geographical entity. These differences largely result from broad scale difference in landscape taphonomy, and the depositional contexts from which most sites were recovered: the northern regions are dominated by open air sites, with archaeological material being recovered predominantly from fluvial or loessic deposits, whilst the southeastern French record is dominated by cave sites, and southwestern France by a combination of both. These different contexts necessarily involve different geomorphological dynamics for the landscapes that humans occupied, with a concomitant impact upon firstly, the nature of human occupation (e.g. activities) and secondly, the chances of such occupations being captured and preserved at all (and their taphonomic history over time). Moreover, context also impacts upon possibility and method of recovery (eg. historical

The Palaeolithic research history of each region also affects the structure of the record, and thus our understanding of changing human occupation patterns over time. Within some regions, there is a long history of antiquarian discoveries, but little or no investment in Palaeolithic archaeology in a preventative or development control context. The current, very variable structure of the extant record is fundamentally controlled by these two, inextricably linked factors: on one hand, context and preservation, and on the other, research history and methodologies. The contrast between regions can be illustrated by the north-eastern French and Dutch records (Fig. 9). North-east France has many excavated locales which are recorded in detail and securely attributed to a particular MIS (60% of the archaeological layers) but, 40% of the record is difficult to correlate with a particular MIS; whereas in the Netherlands, only one locality, Maastricht-Belvedere, preserves a very detailed human behavioural sketch of nine archaeological findspots, comprising the whole Saalian record for the country, except the Rhenen industry. The current Western European record of MIS 9-6

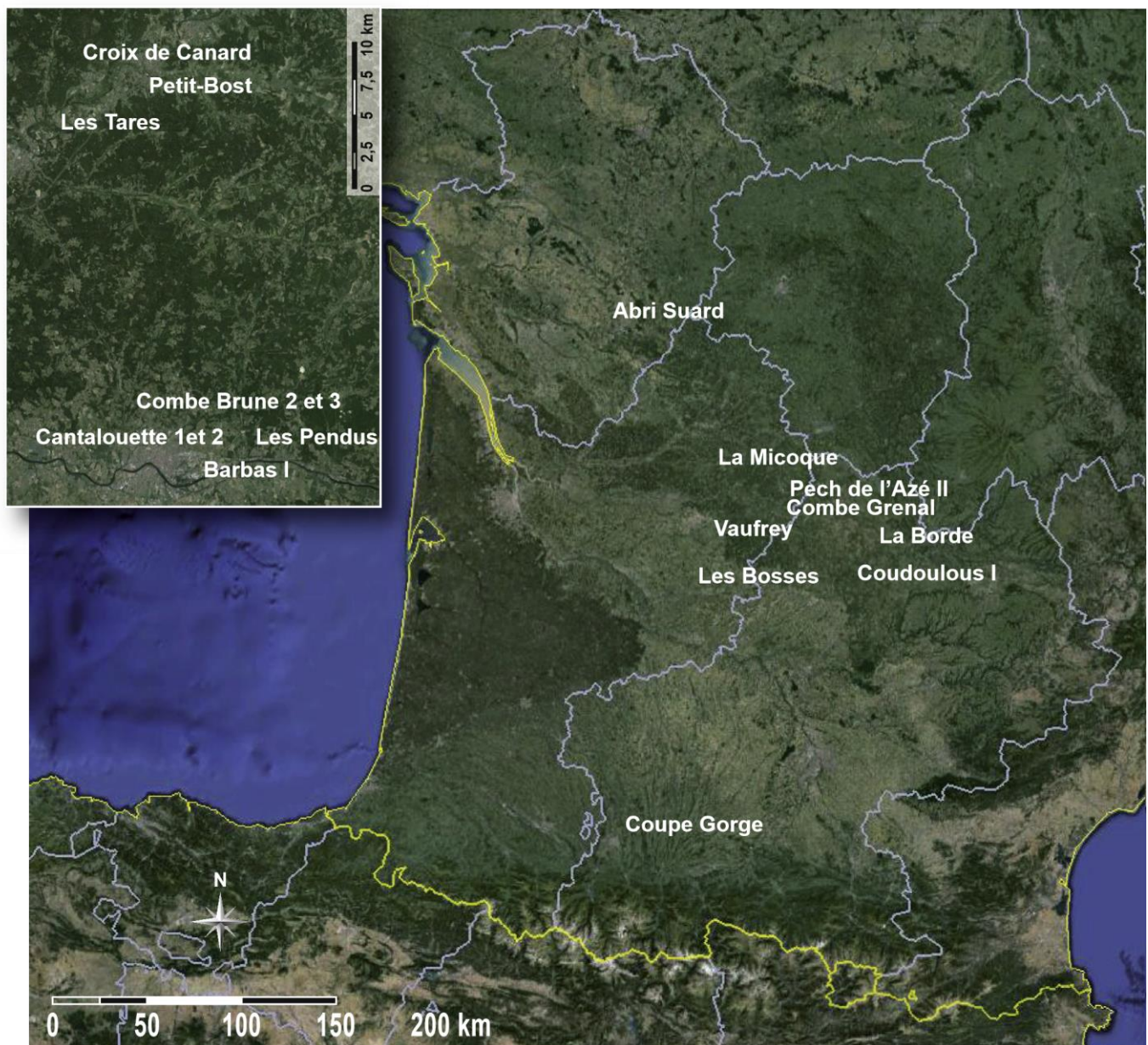


Fig. 8. Distribution map of South-west French sites from MIS 9 to 6, referenced in Table 8. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

gravel extraction versus cave prospection) and also the possibility of actually dating such occurrences, according to available proxies and relevant methods.

must, therefore, be considered as a partial and potentially distorted image; a modest fragment of the entire pattern of human settlement, glimpsed through

multiple filters (taphonomy, research history, and fieldwork practice). It is because of these factors that the types of data, and level of detail, vary from region to region.

Taken together, all these factors contribute to why it is so difficult to bring these regional records together in order to make comparisons. As has often been pointed out, these factors have their roots in specific local research histories. Bringing this data together to address the emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic

spread throughout this entire area actually equate to one human occupation per 1169 years and, in average only one occupation per 9356 years in each eight studied regions. In general, archaeological levels confidently attributed to a MIS (index 4 and 5) are carefully documented excavations which have produced abundant and varied material alongside environmental proxies.

Secondly, by concentrating only upon those occurrences which can be securely attributed to a given MIS (index 3 to 5; cf. Section 3), an overview of site distribution per MIS between regions can be proposed (Fig. 10). Here one

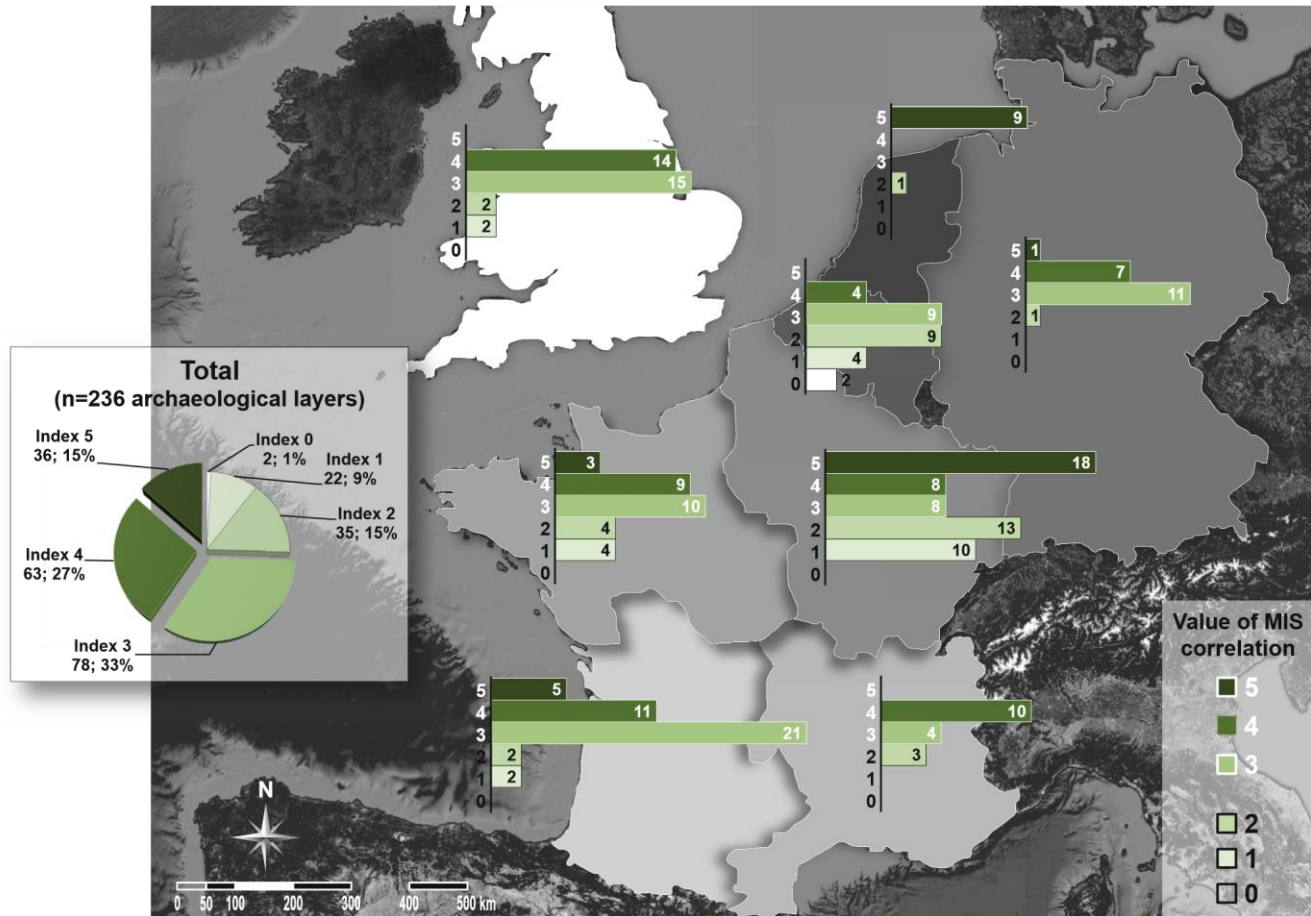


Fig. 9. MIS 9 to 6 regional overviews of the distribution of archaeological layers after the value of their MIS correlations. Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

implies shifting constantly between different scales of analysis and levels of resolution. This shifting frequently masks difference between the original data, creating groups which are perhaps artificial or drawn at such a broad level as to be largely meaningless. To work with the record as it currently stands entails that these interpretative limits be appreciated and worked with in and, it is with these caveats in mind that we address the question of what can we learn from this overview of the north-western European Palaeolithic and its southern fringes for the period MIS 9 to 6?

First, a large number of archaeological occurrences (n = 236) have been attributed to this time period (MIS 9 to 6; Fig. 9). In total, 59 archaeological layers (25% of the archaeological layers; index 0e2) hold insufficient information to allow a reliable correlation with a MIS. The 177 archaeological layers considered to have a secure or relatively secure MIS correlation illustrate the richness of the current record, and the huge advances made in constructing chronological frameworks over the last forty years. Progress in radiometric dating and the construction of a unified lithostratigraphic sequence for the European loess belt are likely to drive future advances in refining these frameworks further. It should be noted that this record is not especially rich given the time span considered: 177 archaeological layers

must bear in mind the limits imposed by amalgamating all sites within a unified chronological framework at the scale of the isotopic stage (cf. Section 3). These caveats aside, most of the record (77%) can be correlated with MIS 7 and 6 (43% and 34% of all archaeological layers). There is a clear contrast between the MIS 9/8 and MIS 7/6 records which is apparent across all regions, with the exception of north-east and south-east France (Fig. 10). The apparent lack of human occupation during full Pleniglacial conditions in northern latitudes of Europe has already been noted, particularly during the Upper Pleistocene (e.g. Hublin and Roebroeks, 2009; Antoine and Locht, 2015; Herisson et al., 2015; Locht et al., 2016). Within the northern regions very few archaeological layers can be correlated to MIS 8, and there is no indication of Pleniglacial human presence. Southern France does not seem to have acted as a refuge area during MIS 8, as there is no apparent increase in occupation during this period. During MIS 7, there is a clear increase in human presence in the north which ends with the onset of the MIS 6 Pleniglacial (Fig. 10), excepting specific occurrences in Belgium and Germany. It is interesting to note there are more traces of human presence in the north during MIS 6 than MIS 8: these never reflect full Pleniglacial conditions, but could represent during short periods of more favourable conditions during MIS 6. In contrast, however, south-eastern France shows a different pattern, with the majority of archaeological layers being correlated with MIS 6: this may reflect

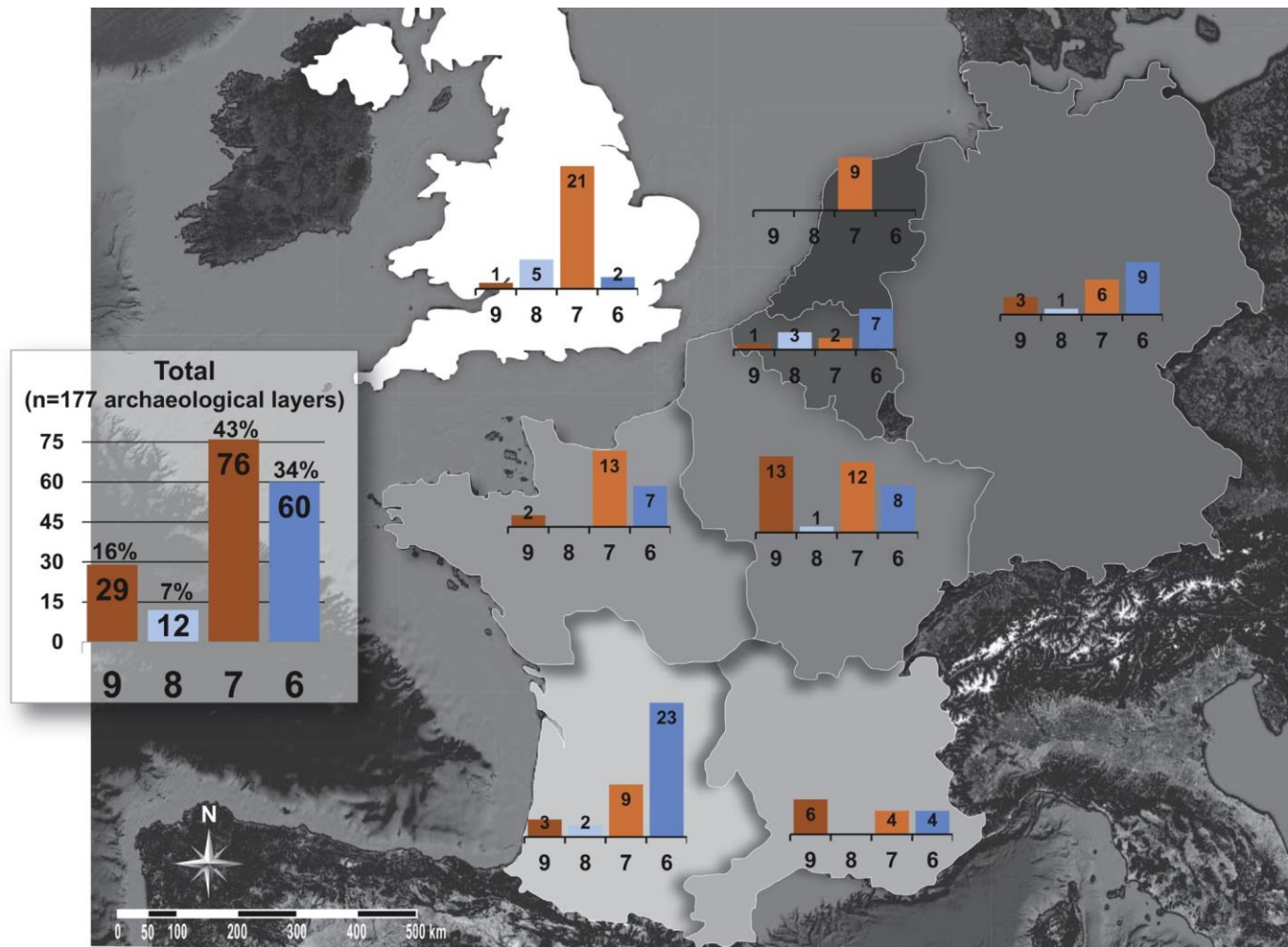


Fig. 10. MIS 9 to 6 regional overviews of the distribution of archaeological layers after their MIS correlations (only for the 172 secure correlated sites, index 3 to 5, cf. Section 3). Background map: image Landsat, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

continuous or semi-continuous settlement of the region with a concomitant increase in population size over time. Observations such as these require testing against new and increasingly detailed data, taking into account the regional taphonomic factors affecting the extant (and future) record.

Thirdly, the archaeological record of this period (MIS 9 to 6) allows us to make several observations concerning the various “chaînes opératoires”. In compiling this dataset, we have addressed the “classical” dichotomy asserted between Acheulean bifaces production, on one hand, and Levallois methods on the other: we have taken into account the main “chaînes opératoires” known for the end of the Lower Palaeolithic and the onset of the Middle Palaeolithic (cf. Section 3). “Acheulean” bifaces are present in MIS 9 assemblages (well represented in “Acheulean” layers in north east France; Fig. 11) but are missing from well dated, primary context sites in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. “Acheulean” handaxe production continues to be practiced through MIS 7 and 6, mainly in southern regions. Migrating platform core technology (“Clactonian” flaking) is strongly attested by the records of the United Kingdom, north-western France and southern France (Fig. 11). However, it does not appear to be practiced in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany during this entire period, and is only recorded in north-eastern France during MIS 9.

“Prepared Core technology” (White and Ashton, 2003) is minimally represented in northern regions, and absent from southern regions (Fig. 11). Levallois method(s) first appear during MIS 9 (more precisely late MIS 9/early MIS 8). These initial Levallois cores and products are present within layers that are considered to be Lower Palaeolithic in character, and only ever make up a small part of these assemblages. One exception is the site of Kesselt-Op de Schans where Levallois flaking, combined with “discoidal production systems, simple prepared core technology and [...] a multiple platform core” (Van Baelen, 2014) and other technoeconomic aspects of the assemblage suggest a Middle Palaeolithic character.

After this initial appearance of Levallois flaking during late MIS 9, followed by a lack of data during MIS 8, there is a dramatic increase in both the number of sites, and the use of the Levallois method during MIS 7. During this period, at least 53 and potentially 60 archaeological layers contain Levallois artefacts, representing between 70% and 79% of the assemblages. In these series, Levallois products are usually the most important part of any toolkit, contrary to the minor role they played during MIS 9. Volumetric blade production is attested for the first time at Saint-Valery-sur-Somme (De Heinzelin and Haesaerts, 1983) during MIS 8, where an assemblage has been recovered in which a large amounts of refits could be established (Fig. 12). This method of production is rare in

"Acheulean" bifaces (shaping)				
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6
Total				

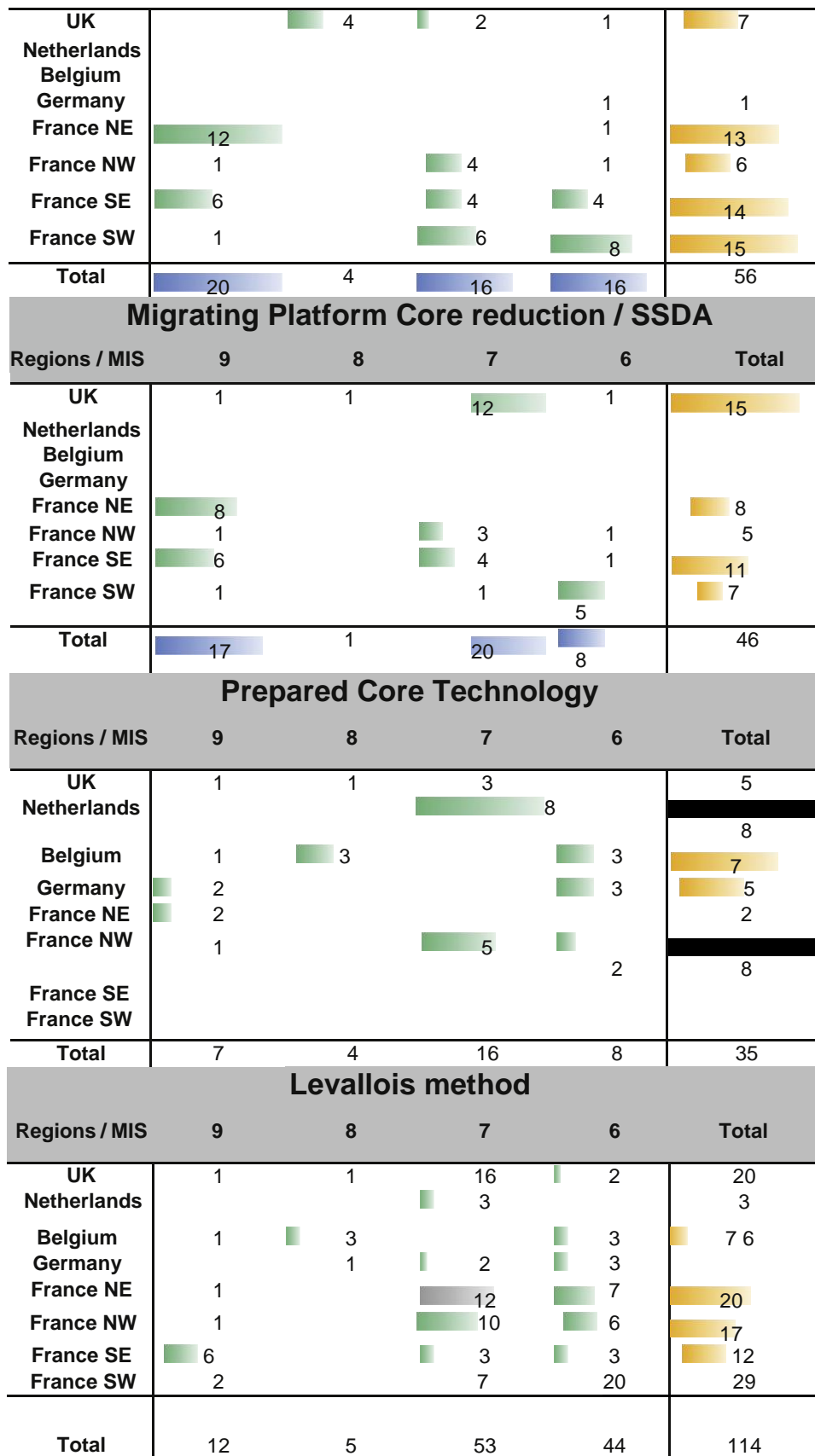


Fig.11. Number of archaeological layers with "Acheulean" bifaces (shaping), Migrating Platform Core Reduction ("Clactonian" flaking)/SSDA, Prepared Core Technology and Levallois method by regions and by MIS.

Volumetric blade method					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK				1	1
Netherlands					
Belgium					
Germany			1		1
France NE		1	2		3
France NW			1		1
France SE			2	1	3
France SW			2	8	10
Total		1	8	10	19
Discoid method					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK	1		8	2	11
Netherlands			5		5
Belgium	1	1		1	3
Germany					
France NE	2		2	2	6
France NW			1	1	2
France SE	6		4	4	14
France SW	2		3	8	13
Total	12	1	23	18	54
"Mousterian" bifaces (shaping)					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK					
Netherlands					
Belgium		1			1
Germany			3		3
France NE				1	1
France NW			2	1	3
France SE					
France SW	1		1	2	4
Total	1	1	6	4	12
Weekly predetermined methods					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK					
Netherlands			1		1
Belgium	1	1	1	6	9
Germany					
France NE	7		9	5	21
France NW			3	2	5
France SE				3	3
France SW	2		1	5	8
Total	10	1	15	21	47

Fig. 12. Number of archaeological layers with volumetric blade method, Discoid method, “Mousterian” bifaces (shaping) and weekly predetermined methods by regions and by MIS.

MIS 7 and 6 assemblages. Discoidal flaking is almost always present, except in Germany where it is absent. “Mousterian” bifaces are mostly present in southern France, north-western France and Germany, often during MIS 7. The link between the so-called “Acheulean” and “Mousterian” bifaces is still an open question. Production methods characterised by limited predetermination are very poorly represented, if at all, and tend to be restricted to a few geographical regions (Fig. 13). The Quina method is only attested at Petit Bost (2; South-western France) during MIS 9/8 and at SainteAnne 1 and Payre (south-eastern France) and at Ebbsfleet (UK) during MIS 7. Trifacial shaping is limited to south-western France where it becomes a more important component of assemblages between MIS 9 and 6. Pebble tools are frequent in southern and north-western French assemblages throughout the period, and occur only once in Germany, at Hunas.

This brief overview of the regional distribution of the main “chaînes opératoires” throughout this period suggests that some of the differences we see concerning technocomplexes reflect the current research agendas and research areas of schools of thought rather than reflecting prehistoric behavioural patterns. The way technological strategies are defined by different researchers across the region, and the precise moment when particular analyses were undertaken, creates serious difficulties when trying to interpret the record as a whole.

To summarise, knapping methods that are viewed as Lower Palaeolithic in character, such as migrating platform core reduction (“Clactonian” flaking) and the shaping of “Acheulean” bifaces continue throughout MIS 9–6, but occur more regularly in southern regions. Towards the end of MIS 9 or at the beginning of MIS 8 (between 300 and 280 ka), Levallois flaking appears within the context of a generally “Lower Palaeolithic” technology, forming only a small part of these assemblages in the north and south: a notable exception, however, is Kesselt, where technical behaviours typical of the Middle Palaeolithic were practiced. The exceptional status of this Kesselt assemblage calls for better dating evidence for this site. There is little evidence of human presence during MIS 8

Quina method					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK			1		1
Netherlands					
Belgium					
Germany					
France NE					
France NW					
France SE					
France SW	1		3		4
Total	1		4		5
Trifacial shaping					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK					
Netherlands					
Belgium					
Germany				2	2
France NE					
France NW					
France SE					
France SW	1	2	4	5	12
Total	1	2	4	7	14
Pebble tools					
Regions / MIS	9	8	7	6	Total
UK					
Netherlands					
Belgium					
Germany			1		1
France NE					
France NW	1		5	1	7
France SE	6		4	4	14
France SW	1	2	5	12	20
Total	8	2	15	17	42

Fig. 13. Number of archaeological layers with Quina method, Trifacial shaping and pebble tools by regions and by MIS.

Pleniglacial. In contrast, MIS 7 was witness to an explosion in human presence, marked by a multitude of sites, the regional dominance of various Levallois methods, and the development of volumetric blade production and the Quina method. With a reversion to cold conditions during MIS 6, both southern and northern latitudes reflect an more marked human presence, in contrast to MIS 8: potentially, different cultural groups (or even, perhaps, different species?) may have co-existed in south-west France. Interestingly, this period is characterised by a series of technological innovations: the emergence of knapping methods (Levallois, discoidal, volumetric blade production) which allowed the production of controlled and predetermined endproducts (flakes, points and blades). These approaches proved both successful and long lived throughout the entire Middle Palaeolithic. Currently, our understanding of how these innovations came about and spread is considerably limited by a paucity of sites correlated to MIS 9, and particularly with the near absence of occupation during MIS 8. Taking into account data from northern and southern Europe, if one were to choose an artificial point to fix between a Lower and a Middle Palaeolithic world, it might perhaps be best placed between 300/280 and 243 ka. The extant record shows a similar scenario in northern and southern regions with the relatively rapid spread and lasting adoption of Levallois flaking after this point. As White, Scott and Ashton proposed in 2006, “the Early Middle Palaeolithic represents an intensification of Lower Palaeolithic behavioural repertoires, showing increasingly sophisticated cultural and social life underwritten by a major change in lithic technology”.

To conclude, this paper gives a critical assessment of current research on the emergence of the Middle Palaeolithic in northwestern Europe and its southern fringes. By focussing on the main “chaînes opératoires”, rather than singling out any one for particular attention, we have been able to document one of the features of the transition between the Lower and the Middle Palaeolithic from a wider perspective than previous analyses, which mostly concentrated on the “Acheulean” biface/Levallois flaking dichotomy. A whole suite of technological approaches became widely practiced during this period (phenomenon of technical radiation), encompassing all the variety that exists throughout the entire Middle Palaeolithic. The adoption and spread of these innovations is intrinsically linked to environmental changes in a broader sense (faunal changes, landscape changes, vegetation changes, climatic condition changes and social changes). However, the fact that these varied strategies, adapted and used in different ways, emerge from this point onwards could also reflect the appearance of new cognitive abilities in western European Middle Pleistocene hominid group(s). Human remains are very few for this time period and direct links between the archaeological record (technological and behavioural changes) on one hand, and the evolution of the “Neanderthal lineage” on the other hand still have to be made and tested. However, even if “The work on understanding [the Early Middle Palaeolithic] and its significance in the evolution of archaic European hominids can begin” now (White et al., 2006), a look back through the mirror to the 1970's shows us both how far we have come, and the gap that still remains within our current knowledge of the end of the Lower Paleolithic and the onset of the Middle Palaeolithic.

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